



XEN'DRIK EXPEDITIONS

Endgame (Round One): First Strike **Expedition Adventure #9** **An Adventure for 13th Level Characters** **(Scaled for 11th to 16th Levels of Play)**

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The Table, a mysterious consortium from across the waves, has come with an armada, a legion of soldiers with only one goal - complete dominion over Stormreach. With the city's defenses still broken by the recent pirate attacks, it falls to the city's four strongest factions to defend their home. But when the horizon is choked by the sails of a fleet so vast it dwarfs the sea itself, can anything survive their deadly first strike?

Based on the original DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® rules created by E. Gary Gygax and Dave Arneson and the new DUNGEONS & DRAGONS game designed by Jonathan Tweet, Monte Cook, Skip Williams, Rich Baker, and Peter Adkison.

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Adventure Background

It all comes down to this.

A conspiracy has been building for years against the powers that be in Stormreach. Started at the mercantile level as a way of ensuring fair trade and open exploration of Xen'drik, this conspiracy was founded and continues to be led by a group of powerful businessmen and leaders from many of the dragonmarked houses.

This group calls itself the Table, a small conclave of wealthy nobles and warlords interested in keeping Stormreach from becoming an independent state that could lock the emerald continent's only good port away from use by the Five Kingdoms. Their aim is to ensure that no haven exists in Xen'drik for those who would use such a closed harbor as a safe place to foment rebellion against the Five Kingdoms and the fragile peace of the Thronehold Accord.

This noble goal has unfortunately been tainted in recent months by some of its members. Instead of looking to maintain the peace and safeguard the Five Kingdoms, the Table's efforts have increasingly been turned to a much more selfish and vastly simpler task: conquest.

The Table's plan has taken a long time to come together and utilizes "borrowed" resources from the holdings represented by the Table's members. This has resulted in an attack force larger than any Xen'drik has seen in centuries. The power in the Table's army is rivaled only by the acumen of its commanders and the ferocity of its most fearsome asset.

The Table's leader, Guiver'lan d'Tharashk, has been cultivating contacts through his private holdings and interests, gathering cultists of the Dark Six and other fringe individuals with no other allegiances. This loose coalition under his control has yielded a great and terrible reward – control over a legendary beast slumbering in the waters near Stormreach. This massive creature, called the tarrasque in ancient lore, is the hammer Guiver'lan intends to use to crush the defenses of Stormreach.

Behind the lumbering titan, he and his co-conspirators have assembled a private navy with both soarwood sea vessels and airships. More than a dozen displaced mercenary and decommissioned military units have banded together under the Table's various leaders to crew these ships with skill and fervor, each one promised a stake in the sack of Stormreach.

As powerful as the Table's forces are, they are not unbeatable. Guiver'lan and the Table are confident in their victory, but they know of two weak links in their plan. The first is a traitor to their membership, a warlord-knight named Raven with enough knowledge of the Table's methods to turn the tide of battle if he survives long enough to reveal what he knows. The second is the existence of the four factions in Stormreach. Each one is outside the government, outside direct bribery or control.

This makes the members of those factions wildcards in the only game that matters: the battle for subjugation of the emerald continent itself. Dealing with them during the attack would be random and difficult to coordinate because of the chaos of battle. Guiver'lan and his allies have something more direct and personal in mind.

Using information leaked by spies in the factions, the Table has divided each one's members into small groups and drawn them into isolated locations in Stormreach under the false auspices of a "special mission." Cut off from their resources and allies, these limited gatherings are perfectly set up for assassination. In this way, Guiver'lan is being true to his darkest secret; he is not actually of House Sivis but instead of the renegade and outlawed House Tarkanan.

The PCs are one of these small gatherings targeted by the Table. If they can survive their attempted assassination, they may be able to stand against the coming storm and live to see another day. Otherwise, they will be the first victims of Endgame.

Adventure Synopsis

The adventure begins with the PCs gathered in a dusty basement in Stormreach, each one summoned by a letter that resembles missives they have all received many times. This time the summons is a trap, and shortly after coming together, they are viciously attacked by assassin agents of the Table. This is an all-out assault on the PCs and not at all a fair fight. Wave after wave of enemies arrive, all intent on ending the PCs' existence by any means necessary.

Before they can succumb to this relentless onslaught, the PCs witness another arrival by means of a teleportation portal on one wall of the basement. The newcomer is a very young dragon child of Stormrider, a powerful ally of the Crimson Codex and he offers a fleeting chance at escape if the PCs move fast enough. Whether in desperation or after victory over their would-be killers, the PCs can follow the scaled savior to the lair of her father and, as she promises, answers to why they were just beset.

Once in the Cavernous Lyceum, Stormrider's new lair many miles outside Stormreach, the PCs can recover with the aid of the great dragon's considerable resources. The massive blue dragon scholar has as

many questions about what has occurred as the PCs, but he also knows what they do not; he knows that while the PCs were being attacked, so to was Stormreach.

After showing the PCs a glimpse of the battle raging in Stormreach's harbor, he asks them to make a fateful choice. He can send them far from Stormreach to the city of Sharn where they will be safe, he can deliver them back into Stormreach so they may take part in the war being fought there, or if they will trust him, he can send them to where one of the Caldyn Fragments suggests "hope may be found when the Storm reaches out in its most desperate hour". He can only open one more teleporting circle so whatever the PCs decide, they all share in the same fate.

At this point, the Players are treated to a "cut scene", a short section of text that describes a scene taking place elsewhere in the adventure. There are four in this adventure, spaced throughout the event, all related to the fate of the tarrasque and the Blackwheel Company's great flying airship – the Glory Road. In this first cut scene, a minotaur officer named Sergeant Crash takes control of the Glory Road and orders a full turn about to face Stormreach. "The city's in trouble!" he shouts to his crew. "Time to earn our danger pay!"

Though the adventure does offer options should the PCs choose to return to the city and fight, the most likely course of action is to pursue the fragment of the Prophecy. This choice takes them to a seemingly forgotten cove north of the city. Closer inspection shows that the cove is not as abandoned as one might presume; there are several sunken ships in its hidden harbor, and one vessel is still afloat.

This ship, the *Adamant*, is a metal clad cutter with sounds of battle ringing out over its armored decks. The PCs have arrived at a crucial moment in the fight between the ship's Table-loyal crew and an ambushing force of drow elves led by a battered human warrior. The crew are about to repel the boarders and, if the PCs do not assist the dark elves, they succeed in setting sail towards the battle taking place at Stormreach. If they join the battle (which they likely do after recognizing the human warrior from references in the Caldyn Fragment shared by Stormrider), they can prevent this from happening.

They also gain a valuable ally in the warrior, who introduces himself as Raven, and can take part in a desperate plan of his if they wish. He knows a great deal about the Table, and while he regrets not having gotten to the city in time to warn anyone, he still thinks that he and the PCs can save Stormreach.

His proposal is to use the *Adamant* to sail in behind the attacking fleet without raising suspicions. This allows the PCs to reach the *Khyber's Shadow*, the ship Raven knows will be right at the back of the Table's Armada. The *Khyber's Shadow* is a galleon housing the most powerful of Guiver'lan's cultist allies and ritualists. If it can be taken down, the many spells reinforcing the Table's attacks fail and the city stands a chance of survival.

Upon their agreement and the Adamant's departure toward Stormreach, the second cut scene can be read to the PCs. This one describes the Glory Road arriving over Stormreach, weapons blazing, trying to cut a path through the Table's flying vessels to reach the megalithic creature before it destroys everything in its path.

Since the *Adamant* was intended to be an escort vessel for the *Khyber's Shadow*, Raven believes the PCs can get close enough to launch a surprise assault. This plan actually works, and the deck crew of the *Khyber's Shadow* allows them to come alongside and board unless the PCs do something to give themselves away.

Once the PCs are aboard, Raven takes the *Adamant* and leaves them as he said he would. His intention is to try and get to the Table's flagship and bring an end to the armada's leadership personally. His success, he presses upon them, is up to the PCs' victory over the cultists aboard the *Khyber's Shadow*. If they cannot break the many spells and wards maintained on this ship, his attack is doomed to failure. He wishes them all good fortune and gives one of them his signet ring, which he says may still be able to get the PCs through certain wards used by Table gatherings.

The battle aboard the *Khyber's Shadow* is a brutal one, but the PCs have the advantage of surprise. When they reach the central theurge's chamber of the ship, the signet allows them to bypass a very deadly barrier that would have been difficult to survive otherwise. It also inadvertently gains them an ally for the fight against the cultists themselves.

During the fight, a female assassin named Veleste sees the signet and knows that if the PCs have it, Raven must still be alive and gave it to them freely. This convinces her to switch sides and kill one of the two dark priests leading the cult. The other must be faced by the PCs themselves, but after a challenging battle, they should emerge victorious. The death of both vile priests causes the many Khyber dragonshards in the chamber to start splintering and exploding, signaling the end of the spells the cult was maintaining.

It might also signal the end of the PCs as the ship begins to detonate around them, but Veleste comes to their rescue. She knows that the cult was powering its magic through the use of blood sacrifice energy flowing through an open portal behind the room's grand altar. If they follow her, she shows them how the room's inlaid star can open a dimensional vortex within it and get them all off the *Khyber's Shadow* before it sinks beneath the troubled waters of Xen'drik forever.

The third cut scene plays now, showing the Glory Road with considerable damage as the last of the enemy airships spirals away from her hull in flames. The skies clear between it and the tarrasque, and Sergeant Crash orders all guns to aim at the colossal terror and open fire. When the command is not

immediately obeyed, he grabs the nearest officer and shouts the order again. This earns him a short sword in the gut as the officer explains that there's been a change of plans. "We're mercenaries, sir, and there's been a better offer. Nothing personal."

This portal exits into a basement similar to where the PCs met at the start of the adventure, only much bigger and far more crowded. A defiled altar to the Devourer stands in the center of the room, and two retrievers are methodically grabbing people from the terrified crowd cowering here and placing them on the altar to be grotesquely consumed by its blades and teeth. To save these people (and themselves), the PCs must destroy the retrievers before they become the next sacrifices.

Veleste gives the PCs a parting gift by picking the lock on the room's only exit and disarming its powerful traps. Then, saying only that she "needs to find someone", she slips into the shadows of the corridor beyond and disappears.

What follows is a run through tunnels under Stormreach with refugees in tow, several hundred men, women and children of different races all desperately looking to the PCs to save them. Above the tunnels, the war taking place in the streets of the city can be heard and the earth shakes several times as the tarrasque takes its toll.

Along the way, the PCs (starting with any Codex PCs) receive a mental contact by Stormrider. "The city may be lost. Save who you can. Flee to the Hold of Light. My child will lead you. Live now to fight later!" At the end of the tunnel, the PCs emerge through a sewer grating just outside the western walls of Stormreach. The blue hatchling from before is there and does as his father ordered. Moving as quickly as the PCs and their refugee caravan can go, he leads them towards Radiant Hold, the stronghold of the Covenant of Light.

This is the last cut scene, showing the PCs a bridge covered in blood and broken bodies. A staggering minotaur, badly wounded but unbroken, reaches the Glory Road's wheel and stares out its main window at the rampaging tarrasque. Patting the wheel and gazing around the bridge, he says to the Glory Road, "Always figured this was how we'd go out, old girl."

As the PCs run across open ground toward the glowing citadel in the distance and the only hope of sanctuary they have left, they get to bear witness to an awesome and terrible sight. The *Glory Road* screams down out of the clouds and rams the tarrasque. The mammoth beast falls back, going down under the crushing force of the huge airship, and both are consumed in a fiery explosion powerful enough to blast most of Stormreach's port into ashes!

This is how the first part of Endgame ends, with the PCs on their way to Radiant Hold, hundreds of refugees in tow, and the city of Stormreach burning and besieged behind them.

Troubleshooting

The chief element of this scenario to keep in mind is that *Endgame* is the final chapter in the Xen'drik Expeditions campaign. It starts big and gets bigger right up to the end of the adventure. Maintaining this feel and this pace is a challenge, but to properly wrap up this two-year storyline, nothing less will do. Keep the PCs moving at all times; they should only get rest or a chance to relax during the brief interlude in Stormrider's cavern library lair.

A second issue worth noting is the number of combats in this module. Most Xen'drik Expedition modules feature a fair amount of roleplaying opportunity in keeping with the RP-rich setting of Eberron itself. *Endgame* (both rounds) is an exception to this rule. While there are certainly moments where the PCs can roleplay, this scenario is almost entirely geared towards the violent events surrounding the brutal siege of Stormreach and the sundering of the four factions.

Try to keep this pace and feel going through the adventure. Keep the players on their toes, make sure the pace stays active, and ensure events of the scenario occur quickly enough that the game feels like just rushed enough to be a credible finale for the campaign.

Adventure Start

Distribute Handout One to the players and give them a few moments to read it before launching into the following scene. Once they understand why they are here, read or paraphrase the text below, making sure the PCs are settled in before dropping them into the ambush in "The Reason I Called You All Here."

The room is old and dusty, seemingly abandoned. There is little here except for old furniture, a tarnished picture frame with a faded painting on one wall and the closed door leading to the stairs that rise out of here to the dilapidated house above. Like many of the basements in Stormreach, the walls are hard-packed earth and rough hewn stone shored up with jungle wood timbers.

Give the PCs enough time to talk among themselves and get to know each other before springing the ambush on them. Many of the PCs may have traveled together in the past, and there is every chance that more than one faction is represented among them here. Do not rush this initial meeting: the players should feel like they have been given ample time to get into character and interact with each other before the action begins.

This assault has been carefully planned by the Table and takes nearly every contingency into account. The odds of the PCs being able to preempt the attack are very slim **but** do not automatically subject them to it. If the PCs take the proper precautions, and if there is a fair chance they would detect the ambush before it is sprung, allow them to avoid the surprise round noted below.

The Reason I Called You All Here

Shortly after the PCs have arrived in their basement meeting place, the Table's forces are unleashed upon them. The following creatures attack, one wave after another, as detailed in Tactics. Each wave is sent by the magical power being controlled by the cultists aboard the *Khyber's Shadow*, channeled through a devotee in the city itself.

This devotee, an adept named Keshra, is in the house above the PCs, hidden in the attic of the house in a trance. This trance allows the adept to act as the point of origin for summoning spells cast by the *Khyber's Shadow* ritualists. This information is given on the off chance that the PCs would be able to act upon it. For the most part, they simply have to react to the waves of monsters coming to end them. However, if they seek the source of their torment and have the ability to get to the cultist in the attic, you can simply describe the comatose adept as follows:

In this cramped and narrow attic, a glowing circle lies engraved in the wooden floor, anointed in blood. Sitting beside it against the wall, an ashen-skinned man sits in a deep trance, murmuring soundlessly as strange lights dance around his outstretched hands.

Keshra cannot put up any kind of fight and cannot defend himself in anyway. If slain, the attacks stop immediately but only for the PCs' group. There are dozens of similar adepts scattered throughout the city, doing this same service for the Table against many other gatherings of faction agents. Even in the unlikely event of the PCs finding Keshra and ending him before he can overwhelm them with summoned monsters, the factions suffer huge casualties this night because of the many other ambushes going on simultaneously.

It is far more likely that this scene will run as described below.

The door to the room shatters inward, a cloud of splinters and old nails. Shapes pour into the basement, their eyes bright and their claws sharp. "Greater powers than you have plans for this night," hisses one of the creatures as it rushes forward.

The beast behind it finishes the sentence as hatred and bloodlust burn in its gaze. "And you wretches just are not in them!"

Foes: The ambush is a series of waves, summoned creatures sent one after another over a number of rounds. Each wave appears in the squares marked on the map as stairs, ready to charge into the basement and engage the PCs. The monsters are impossible to reason with and because of the *limited wish* laid on the basement area before the PCs arrive, unaffected by *protection* circles and banishment-related magic. What the Table adepts choose to summon, the PCs are going to have to fight.

Tactics: The summoned creatures are all fully intelligent members of their species, able to fight tactically and use flanking and charges to full advantage. They offer no mercy even if they are normally of the sort to do so, compelled by their summoning to kill as quickly and efficiently as possible. The first wave takes full advantage of the surprise they are likely to receive.

If the PCs state that they are being attentive and on guard, allow them Listen checks (DC 25) to hear the sound of the summoning magic placing the first wave in the stairwell outside. If they succeed, roll initiative as normal for both sides.

Because slain summoned creatures disappear, there are no issues with bodies taking up room in the basement or cluttering up the battle site. Those with area effects or combat magic do not hesitate to use these powers if they can catch more PCs than allies in their range. None of them fight with any sense of self preservation; this is all or nothing for the summoned minions.

Development: There are four waves that attack the PCs before the appearance of Scrybe, Stormrider's child. They arrive in this order, repeating this pattern twice after Scrybe offers the PCs an escape route. While the PCs could feasibly fight their way through every wave of monsters, there is no need for them to battle past the first set of four summonings and through raw attrition, they could be hurting pretty badly at that point in any case.

Attack Waves:

- **Wave One: Babau Ragers (6):** babau demon; hp 66; *Monster Manual 40*
- **Wave Two: Serpentine Slayers (5):** mixed male and female yuan-ti abominations; hp 70; *Monster Manual 264*
- **Wave Three: Crimson Slaad Warriors (4):** red slaad; hp 65; *Monster Manual 228*
- **Wave Four: The Lion of Battle:** guardinal leonal; hp 110; *Monster Manual 142*

Feel free to change these up as you like, even substituting in waves of your own design as long as the encounter levels for each wave stat around 10 or 11 and never exceed 12. This ambush should challenge and frighten the PCs but not completely overwhelm them.

Each wave occurs at the end of the round in which the last wave is completely defeated (unconscious, helpless or dead) **OR** seven rounds have passed since the last wave began. Remember that the appearance of Scribe occurs at the start of the same round in which Wave Four appears; this gives the PCs a likely much-needed chance at escape even if they are being totally overwhelmed.

It is very important to note that this ambush is supposed to set the tone for the game, NOT slaughter the PCs. If the PCs are have a lot of trouble with their enemies, slow down the waves or even skip one or two and get the PCs their portal of escape quickly. There is an opportunity for *resurrection* in the next scene so a PC or two slain is not the end of the game; it might even help create the proper air of desperation for the rest of the game. Adjudicate as you see fit.

Scaling the Encounter

11th-12th Level Characters: Reduce the numbers in waves 1 and 2 by two creatures. Reduce the numbers in wave 3 by one creature.

14th - 16th Level Characters: Increase the numbers in waves 1 and 2 by two creatures. Increase the numbers in wave 3 by one creature.

A Friendly Storm

The moment the fourth wave appears, an escape route opens for the PCs. Read the following as soon as the fourth wave enters the basement and prepares to attack.

Dust swirls across the surface of the stone wall at the back of the basement. Lines of blue light form a large, arcane glyph and a series of glowing, interwoven circles. At its heart, the strange symbol pulses with a shadowy light and then opens into a crackling vortex of lightning and darkness.

A figure half-emerges, a cobalt-colored dragon the size of large warhorse. "Hurry!" it hisses, one clawed hand reaching out and beckoning to you all. "Quickly! Father cannot keep this open for long!"

Even as the young dragon speaks, the edges of the portal flicker and its spiraling edges begin to slowly contract, growing smaller with each passing second...

Creature: Scribe is Stormrider's only full-blooded child on Xen'drik and a staunch but hidden supporter of both his father and the Crimson Codex faction. By reaching out to the PCs in their hour of need, he is proud to finally be taking an active role in his sire's causes. He has strict instructions not to fight anyone at this time, but he is not above a well-placed breath weapon if it helps the PCs escape.

Scribe, Son of the Storm; male juvenile blue dragon bard 4; hp 160; *Monster Manual 72*.

The location of the portal is marked on the combat map for this section of the adventure. Though Scribe does not engage in combat for the PCs, he helps out by breathing on the nearest enemy (electric breath weapon as per a juvenile blue dragon, 8d8 damage [DC 20]). If the PCs seem skeptical about using this sudden exit (and it is completely logical that they would be), Scribe appeals to them in the hopes that one of them is a member of the Crimson Codex. *"My father is Stormrider; he wants to help!"*

For three rounds, Scribe stays and tries to get PCs to come through the portal. He breathes again at the start of the third round, but if there are still PCs in the basement, and they are making no attempt to come with him, he ducks back through sadly. *"You are doomed if you stay. Fare well and good luck!"*

At the end of the following round (four full rounds after appearing), the portal closes and does not reappear. Any form of movement that brings a PC into contact with the portal is enough to send that character through it as long as they are willing to transport or unable to resist because of unconsciousness, paralysis, death, etc. The *teleportation circle* is instantaneous, with the PCs feeling only a slight shift in reality and a moment of nausea before they reappear in an altogether different place.

The energies of the *teleportation circle* have been gathering since before the PCs arrived in this basement. As such, any form of conjuration (teleport) magic like *teleport*, *dimension door* or *ethereal jaunt* causes the PCs attempting it to become *stunned* and 'lost,' reappearing with the other PCs in Stormrider's

cavern lair once the action of the scene moves from the ambush to Part One, The Cavernous Lyceum, below.

As DM, try to steer the events of this introduction in that direction, getting the PCs through the portal one way or another. The only thing that awaits the PCs should they stay here is death, either in the basement of this house or in the streets when the Table launches their attack. That said, getting the PCs through the portal into Stormrider's lair can be done very cinematically if you wish. For example, a powerful backhanded strike from the leonal could send a critically wounded PC flying through the room into the portal instead of killing him or her outright.

Even so, endeavor to make the scene come alive with action instead of just railroading the PCs into the next section of the adventure. There is a lot of story to be told in this scenario and though the path through these scenes may seem set in stone, there is plenty of room for you to connect the events together in your own way. A few suggestions are given here to help you tailor the introduction in this fashion.

Crafting the Scene (or Help! My PCs Have Jumped the Script!)

Though game play in this scene may go smoothly and the PCs simply use Stormrider's portal as soon as it arrives, the nature of roleplaying games is such that more often than not, the PCs may have completely different intentions. If you find that the actions of the PCs should allow them to get out of the basement and escape the ambush entirely, feel free to use these suggestions as you see fit.

One: You can simply use 'undefined magical effects' to keep them in the basement and make the PCs face the ambush as presented. It is perfectly in keeping with the feel of Eberron for there to be mysterious magical forces at work in any given plot.

Two: You can just have the ambush follow the PCs. The adept in the attic may have access to a scrying device, and no matter where the PCs try to run, the waves of ambush continue to find them. The people of Stormreach are a very self-interested lot and most do not help the PCs even if there is a battle royale in the streets. This solution does pose other problems (the city is not warded against anti-summoning magic like the basement and so the PCs have a greater range of options) but it is a possible solution for you to try.

Three: If all else fails, let them escape the ambush. Through cleverness, raw power or blind luck, the PCs evade the attack. Stormrider can still open a portal near them and his son request that they come through. Even if they are not in immediate danger, the PCs might still be coerced into hearing what a powerful dragon with vast resources has to say, especially if he claims to know who just set them up.

Once the scene resolves itself, move to Part One below if you can. If events in game preclude you from doing so, run the action as best you can and try to steer them back to Stormrider. The attack on Stormreach has not yet occurred, but the secret war against the factions has already begun. As such, the PCs are not likely to find many allies and should eventually come to see the logic in speaking with the only creature with both answers and a willingness to share them.

Part One: The Cavernous Lyceum

Once the PCs step through the portal, read or paraphrase the following:

There is a sharp drop, a sense of vertigo as you are pulled from reality and sent hurtling through the void toward an unknown fate. When the sudden wave of nausea passes, darkness becomes light and silence becomes thunder.

Slowly, the light resolves itself into shapes and the thunder reveals itself to be the slow breathing of a massive blue dragon towering above you. Azure scales ripple over the great beast's body like thousands of sapphire shields, moving over sinuous muscle as it shifts to regard you all more closely.

Let the PCs react initially in any way they wish. They are in the middle of a huge cavern with a colossal dragon; a certain amount of alarm is understandable. While Stormrider would not appreciate outright attack, he does not take any offense if weapons are drawn or PCs react defensively. As soon as the PCs seem ready to hear him out, read on:

The much smaller blue dragon that led you here coils around a nearby pillar as its sire rises up to his full height. Massive wings unfurl and refold, obscuring the room for a moment before they tuck themselves away again. Around you, the carved walls are covered in carved stone shelves, each one packed with books, scrolls, alabaster tablets and silver-chased plaques.

The huge dragon rumbles, one taloned claw spreading out as he moves closer. "Welcome to my home. I am Stormrider, and you are my guests." The dragon raises its clawed right hand and gestures for your attention. "You doubtless have questions, but for now, allow me to tend to your wounds."

Between Stormrider's own spellcasting ability to use *cure critical wounds* and various healing items in his hoard, the draconic sage heals the PCs completely if they need it and accept his aid. He can also offer *resurrection* services through the use of one of his greatest treasures – an *altar of resurrection*. He can even provide the jewels needed to make the altar function if the PCs can pay for them. He is a dragon after all; he cannot bring himself to just give away treasure.

Also because of the importance of the current moment, Stormrider is willing to overlook a certain amount of coarse behavior and rudeness. He understands the trauma of what the PCs have just been through and the level of trust he is asking them to place in him.

Crimson Codex PCs are an exception here. Stormrider has sacrificed so much in service to the Codex and the least he expects is decent behavior from the people who share his allegiances. He watches these PCs very closely, holding them to a higher standard than other PCs. If they acquit themselves well, be sure to show his appreciation for their tact and civility. If they are rude or abusive, feel free to make his irritation very, frighteningly apparent.

Once the PCs are ready to hear him out, use the text below as a guide for what he tells them.

"Now that your wounds are tended and you've had a moment to rest, we should get to the matter at hand. There are forces at work in Stormreach beyond all of us. The source of your travails this night has greater and more terrible plans for the city you serve."

"I would have brought you here sooner, but I had to wait for the barriers around your would-be grave to weaken before my portal could open. The powers arrayed against us summoned many foes against you and would have kept sending more if you had not fled. They will not be pleased that you still live, a disappointment I fear they will not suffer much this night."

"You have been pulled from the pyre, my friends, but the flames are most certainly burning despite your absence. All the people of Stormreach share your plight. But where you were offered a chance for survival, no such hope exists for them. There is a dark hand moving against the city, and I am not sure anything can deny its reach any longer."

Of course, Stormrider does not expect the PCs to believe him just at his word. For days, he has been using all the tools and magic at his disposal to analyze a pressing fragment of the draconic Prophecy. Though his scrying crystal has only been giving him momentary images and confusing glimpses, he knows that the 'doom' he foresaw in the Caldyn Fragments is already underway.

Calling the PCs to one side of his huge library lair, he curls around the back of a huge dais and gestures for them to watch him as he activates his crystal for them.

"Come, gather around, and I will show you what is occurring in Stormreach at this very moment." The dragon's long claws caress the broad facets of a violet jewel several feet wide. "Gaze into the crystal and bear witness to your narrow escape."

Assuming the PCs cooperate, they see the following, read or paraphrased as you prefer:

The glowing purple gem hovers over its ornate silver pedestal. Deep within, the light resolves itself into a single image, a clear glimpse into what looks to be a raging fire!

The flames part to show a walkway of thick wood and stone, a pier completely engulfed in flames. Men and women rush past, all with a look of utter terror on their faces. The crystal reverberates with their cries of panic, a haunting sound that quickly fills the cave. The port of Stormreach is under siege, an attack that already looks to have claimed many lives.

Past the burning bodies, the jewel's point of view pulls back, showing a battered caravel only a few dozen yards from dock, sails ablaze, and sailors leaping into the churning waters just as a massive hand smashes down to split the vessel in two. The crystal moves up that creature's massive arm and shows you the source of the assault even as it hefts the back half of the ship out of the water and hurls it at many of the fleeing figures on land. The sound of their deaths is drowned out by a roar too savage to be believed.

The monster is vaguely reptilian, colossal in size with a feral light in its far-too intelligent eyes. Bestial wrath drives it forth as three ballista bolts shatter harmlessly off its chest, unable to pierce the thick front plate of its dark, bony carapace. Fragments of wood and steel spiral around it, a few getting caught in the thick, black iron chain that winds its way around the beast's upper arms, neck and waist like a foul harness.

Two men, robed mages shrouded in dozens of battle spells, race towards the titanic creature, hurling bolts of lightning as they fly. The electrical blasts reflect off the beast's carapace as well, one arching back and striking the wizard casting it full force. As the other mage desperately turns to avoid the beast's grasp, the creature reaches out and plucks the momentarily stunned spellcaster from the air. Bones shatter in its fist and as it passes the doomed wizard into its fang-rimmed maw, the crystal moves mercifully past.

What it shows behind the fearsome monster making its brutal way to Stormreach is almost as frightening. A vast fleet is cutting across the waves, plowing the broken hulls of many of the city's defense

ships under their keels as they come. Though a naval battle rages there, the vessels loyal to Stormreach are woefully outnumbered.

The crystal flares again and lowers slowly to its cradle, going dark once more. "This doom is befalling Stormreach even as we speak. I have been pouring over the Prophecy for weeks, seeking a way to forestall or prevent this from occurring, but I failed." The dragon's eyes close for a moment, his head dipping in the admission of defeat.

Let the PCs react, both to the images they have just seen and the implications of what is happening back home. Reactions may be mixed, as they should be, and even members of the same faction may have radically different ways of dealing with these events.

When it seems appropriate for the dragon to speak again (which may be quite soon if he is addressed correctly), continue below. Be certain to break this text up into conversation if the PCs are asking question or being interactive. Making them a living part of the scene is vastly preferable to simply reading the descriptive text verbatim.

"I saved you because your faces have been revealed to me over these many sleepless days of divining. For reasons unknown to me, each of you has a part to play in this catastrophe. It was important that you live, that you survive to do whatever it is the Prophecy has in mind for you.

"I have served the Prophecy for more years than many of you can imagine. In that time, I have learned that it shows us events as they unfold but without willing action, these crossroads of change will pass us by. The Prophecy considers you to be important, in the past and in this very embattled present. For that reason, if for no other, I was willing to save your lives this night.

"Now you must choose. I have the resources to speed you along to your destinies but even I cannot decide for you what your fate might be. I have scribed one other face in addition to yours, a man I believe vital to anyone in Stormreach living to see the dawn.

"I intend to send you to him, as close as my spells will reach, and let the Prophecy play itself out. I know he will be an ally but just how remains a mystery. Perhaps it is enough that you and he meet. I do not know but I believe the window of time for all this to take shape is growing smaller with each passing second. I will not interfere with your lives any more than offering this choice.

"I can teleport each of you once more this night. It is my preference to send you to the nearby coast where the Prophecy suggests your destinies lie, but I will not force this upon you. Tell me where you wish to go and you will be sent there. My part in this is done once you leave, so choose wisely."

As he speaks, his son Scribe is preparing the *teleportation portal* to work again. It is a complicated magical apparatus with many sockets for dragonshards, some of which are consumed upon operation. His deft draconic hands are loading these sockets with glowing golden shards, making sure the portal is ready when Stormrider calls for it.

If spoken to, he is polite but admits to knowing very little about the events his father has foretold. He is here to do as told and acts as Stormrider wishes in all ways. If he thought his father would allow it, he would be going with the PCs (as a young dragon still coming into his powers, Scribe is very curious and far too adventurous for his father's liking). This desire might come out in conversation but Stormrider does NOT permit his child to accompany the PCs. *"My son has a destiny of his own."*

Once the PCs choose, they are asked to step through the portal one at a time. Stormrider even tops off any mundane supplies they might need (arrows, food, water, even non-costly spell components) before sending them away. He has one other 'gift' for them, one he gives before sending the first PC away.

"As you are interwoven with the Prophecy this night, you should know which section concerns you. Listen well, little ones, and hope to gain insight from its words."

The dragon rises up again, head crests widening as Stormrider stands tall and proud. *"Hear you now the draconic Prophecy, not as a fragment or in some muddled rambling but direct from the voice of one of its living children."*

"Over broken waves, the black bird flies. Its wings must not be clipped, its journey must be complete. If it finds safe harbor, the raven's cries will stir a sleeping army to stand against a coming storm and many who would be lost can be saved."

Stormrider's voice drops back into the calmer tones of conversation. *"I fear that part has come to pass and the opportunity lost. Fortunately for all of us, there is more."*

"If the raven should be forced to land before its passage is done, blood and fire will be its heralds. Death will come to the emerald land and none can move against its terrible harbinger. But even in the darkest hour, hope exists.

"Other birds may join the raven's flight and come to the rescue as a calm follows the raging tide. Soaring over the waves on scarlet wings, they can blind the eye of the beast, break its chains and show the devouring storm that even it is not immune to the glory of its own thunder."

Once Stormrider gives the PCs what, in his mind, is a vastly superior form of the Prophecy (Caldyn Fragment scholars might disagree), he sends them on their way with a heartfelt wish for good fortune. He is convinced that if they fail, Stormreach is doomed and with its loss, every living thing in Xen'drik may not be far behind.

Scribe stands by, adding his quieter but no less heartfelt well-wishes. He also does not feel as bound to non-interference as his father, asking any PCs choosing not to go to the “raven” to change his or her mind. *“The Prophecy always acts to preserve life. Please reconsider. You have a chance to take part in the history of this world. Do not walk away from that.”*

Regardless of their decision, the portal sends them where they wish to go. It is assumed that the PCs decide as a group to follow up on Stormrider’s vision but, if they do not, there are suggestions below for how to proceed.

If the PCs do choose to go where Stormrider wants to send them, continue with Part Two: Black Wings, Red Sails.

Other Plans

The PCs are more than likely to accept Stormrider’s mission for them without argument, allowing you to move quickly to the next section of the adventure. If they do not, you must adjudicate what happens in game. These are some suggestion to help you do that quickly and efficiently.

Some PCs may want to return to Stormreach and fight against the coming forces directly. Stormrider can be your best ally in trying to dissuade them. His glimpse of the Prophecy has shown him that there is no hope of facing the Doom of the Deep and the Table’s fleet directly. Though he does not interfere and force the PCs to meet with Raven, he tries to make it clear that such a goal is suicide. Noble, perhaps, but an empty death when efforts elsewhere might save many lives.

Other PCs may wish to just escape entirely, asking to be teleported to Sharn, Wroat or any other place far from Stormreach. Stormrider reluctantly asks the PC to reconsider but grants such a request if it is asked again. This is easy to deal with; the PCs is removed from the campaign by his or her own hand. Thank the player for coming, explain that their survival comes at the cost of no longer being eligible to play in the second half of the adventure and ask them to leave the table so play can resume. (If this prompts the player to ask for another chance, allow them to rejoin the game and continue on.)

If any PCs return to Stormreach at this time, they are caught up in the battle raging there. These do not have to be played out (and likely should not be played out if other PCs are still following the module as written) but quick summaries and allowing the PCs to take part in whatever way suits them best. With flying ships doing battle in the air, troops loyal to both sides fighting in the streets and the behemoth shadow of the tarrasque bearing down on the city from the harbor, there are many opportunities for heroism.

This level of summary and descriptive combat could be woven into the rest of the game with the city-bound PCs involved intermittently until the rest of the PCs catch up to Stormreach in the last section of the adventure. Having the PCs meet up again (perhaps by having the summarized ones fall through a cave-in into the sacrifice chamber to take part in that battle) would allow you to reunite them in time for the conclusion of the scenario.

Read the first cut scene (found in the Appendix) now.

Part Two: Black Wings, Red Sails

The dragon’s portal sends the PCs to the west and north, many miles from Stormreach to a cove harbor hidden there by rocky shoals and high cliff walls. This small harbor has been a focus for the Table’s efforts for a long time now, one of their twelve hidden bases around the Stormreach area.

Now the PCs have a chance to strike from surprise, aiding someone who has apparently had the exact same idea...

The haze of the portal shimmers away, leaving you on a barren, rocky beach beneath the dim light of Eberron’s many moons, several of which have gone dark. In the distance, there are several small stone buildings, all silhouetted by the flickering yellow light of bonfires.

Sounds echo into the night, the cries and metal clashes of a pitched battle at the docks up ahead. Whatever the source of the flames, there is more violence to be had in the distant harbor.

The map attached to this section of the adventure can be found in the appendix. It corresponds to the area description given below. While the PCs do not have to immediately rush to the sounds of battle, keep in mind that Raven’s forces are slowly reduced by attrition until they decide to help or the beleaguered knight finally falls in battle without their aid.

There is no specific mechanic for determining this. Just consider how long it takes the PCs to respond and adjust how many of Raven's allies remain by the time the PCs join the battle. If they waste no time in doing so, do not penalize Raven's forces at all. If they dawdle or do not seem interested in getting involved, describe a few drow being cut down and slaughtered by the *Adamant's* crew. The Table mercenaries crewing the *Adamant* are vicious cutthroats and spare no opportunity to *coup de grace* whenever they can. This behavior alone should be enough to show the PCs who they should be helping.

1. The Lonely Road

A cobbled road of tumbled and polished river stone connects the two southern buildings and the pier. This road is in remarkable shape, especially considering its age and though it is fractured and disappears among the jungle trees to the west, it is almost perfectly intact in the harbor area itself.

This area is a bit of a mystery, especially for PCs with any knowledge of the history or the cultures of Xen'drik. Neither the giants nor their elven slaves were particularly skilled road builders, and while several avenues and streets do still exist in the ruins of this land, few are in this kind of shape or exhibit this level of craftsmanship. A DC 15 Knowledge (engineering) check reveals the exacting detail and quality of the road, possibly leading the PCs to ask questions that, at least for now, have no answers.

2. The Supply House (EL -)

This old building is completely ruined on its east side, revealing a dark chamber stacked with barrels and crates. The building is old and decrepit, but the supplies are all quite new and appear to be well sealed against the elements.

This building houses the supplies needed by the ships of the Table's reserve fleet. If the PCs and Raven succeed in taking the *Adamant*, the first thing he does after securing the ship is send drow back for these supplies to bring aboard. Whatever can't be stored, he destroys.

"The Table knows about this cove. If we leave these things, they only serve the enemy."

3. The Battered Fortress

Once a tall giant-sized structure providing protection and security to this harbor, this massive building is now almost completely destroyed. Time and the elements have rendered it little more than a pile of jagged stones and a few cracked, questionably reinforced walls.

It looks like a wooden fort was build within the shell recently, but it lies mostly in ruins now, burning logs and several charred bodies. Thick smoke rises off the dead, obscuring the landscape all around.

Just a shell of its former glory, this keep is good for nothing other than wasting time in fruitless exploration. PCs with the Investigate feat or a Search check (DC 25) can find evidence that several medium-sized humanoids (the Table's mercenary marines) have been here roughly a month and used the building's shell as shelter for a wooden palisade fort. Other than its value for PCs looking to camp here overnight, this location serves no useful purpose any longer.

"Let the place burn. If it stands, it will shelter the Table should they have to retreat."

4. The Watcher

Missing its head and one arm, this statue depicts a massive figure in the garb of a buccaneer. Its remaining arm raises a broken cutlass perpendicular to its chest, as if threatening some invisible foe in the distance.

Despite its seeming lack of worth, this statue was used in ancient times to locate distant sites of import. The statue's placement puts it in line with many old ruins, allowing those with the knowledge of how to use its gaze to explore the jungle more efficiently.

The ruins around the base of the statue hold a clue to the use of the statue, though its purpose is far outside the scope of this adventure. Other than wasting the PCs time, it has no direct use. It is included here only for flavor and as a possible time sink.

Carved on the stone in the Common tongue is, "The faceless pirate knows more than he can say. Unable to speak, he shows wise men the way."

Any PC who climbs the statue (DC 10) and looks along the raised blade sees only dark trees in the dim moonlight. There was a clearing in the distance but in recent weeks the jungle has completely reclaimed it.

"I suspect that stone pirate has seen more than all of us combined. Perhaps it's best he cannot speak."

5. A Long Walk (EL 9)

A dark ichor between the cracks of this old stone dock makes the pier look to be in far worse shape than it actually is. Though its end does drop off suddenly, the rest of the long walk into the cove looks sturdy enough to travel.

The ichor is a clue for what lies in wait along the underside of the old pier. A pair of black puddings have spread themselves out over the submerged lower half of this structure, feeding on algae and fish as their colony has for years. PCs walking above them to get to the *Adamant* cause them to gather up and attack, emerging as noted on the map.

Pier Dwellers (2); black pudding (ooze); hp 115, 115; *Monster Manual* 201.

Tactics: The puddings automatically flee into the water if taken below 40 hit points, and they do not return during this adventure.

6. The Adamant (EL 13)

This warship is plated in adamantite, a sweeping blade mounted on either side like deadly fins. The front is built up into a ramming prow and the sides have high shield walls with jagged edges to discourage boarding ropes. Dark crimson sails billow on masts of steel, magical rigging glowing like strands of molten platinum in the moonlight.

The sound of battle is coming from this ship, a moving combat taking place all over its main deck. Dark elves are fighting with armored sailors, long knives lashing against scimitars as both sides clash amid flurries of sudden blood. High on the steps of the ship's narrow forecastle, a human dressed in black chitin armor fights against a massive, exotic-looking man in nautical dress, violet skin ornamented with sea-green jewels as bright as the crystal sword in his over-sized hands.

As he fights on, the dark-haired man presses his inhuman foe up a few stairs, turning to look back at the state of his drow allies. "Don't falter!" he shouts, "We cannot let them beat us!" His cloak billows in the night breeze, a spider silk long cape with an image of a raven in flight.

This ship is key to Raven's plan to undo the Table's plans in the only way he has left. Knowing that the *Adamant* is the ship intended to bring fresh supplies and a marine crew to the *Khyber's Shadow*, he is laying siege to it in an attempt to take the ship. Unfortunately, the marines have proven to be more than he expected, and the battle has become as much about survival as about conquest.

Raven, Former Warlord of the Table; human male knight 15; hp 170.

The PCs are the ones who could turn the tide back in his favor. As the PCs approach the ship, tell them the following:

The huge blue-skinned man plants a vicious kick in the raven-cloaked warrior's chest, sending him flying back down the steps of the forecastle to the deck below. With a shout of triumph, he hefts his crystalline greatsword and charges down the stairs to finish off his staggered foe!

This is the PCs chance to intervene. The open nature of the ship's deck precludes the need for a map; just set up the PCs on one side of a thirty-foot area with Captain Tsurai in the middle and a marker for Raven's stunned and prone body.

Foe: Tsurai is a storm giant, a magical lord of the giantish race that lingers in scattered tribes throughout Eberron. Recruited at sword point by the Table's forces years ago, Tsurai has become a valued member of the organization's fighting assets. Trained in how to operate warships and given command of a powerful humanoid crew, Tsurai is a fearsome enemy on either land or sea.

Captain Tsurai: male storm giant; hp 199 (130 at the time of this battle), *Monster Manual* 125. He wields a +3 keen crystalline greatsword.

Development: The battle on the main deck of the *Adamant* is taking place throughout its hull, and the drow fare approximately as well as the PCs do against Tsurai. If they defeat him, the PCs have secured a victory for the drow as well. If they lose, so do the dark elves and Raven.

If the PCs want to get involved with other battles, set up other combats as you see fit; there are multiple groups of dark elves fighting ogres, bugbears and other humanoids. These fights are no challenge for the

PCs, however; the main challenge here is Tsurai. If they ignore him, he does catastrophic damage to the dark elves before he engages the PCs personally.

Treasure: If the PCs defeat Tsurai, they will find quite a prize in his crystal greatsword, a weapon that sizes itself to the wielder and possesses considerable power. As opposed to the normal rules for event treasure, the PCs may keep this weapon until the end of the second round of Endgame, retaining it after this round is finished. Be sure to note the weapon's additional *spell storing* power if the combat was run at 15th level or higher.

Scaling the Encounter

11th-Level Characters: Captain Tsurai is badly wounded, beginning the battle with only 85 hit points. Also, he is so focused on attacking Raven that the PCs get a surprise round on him automatically.

12th-Level Characters: Tsurai has 130 hit points as noted above but the PCs get a surprise round.

14th-Level Characters: Tsurai uses a healing item just before the fight and is at 199 hit points.

15th-Level Characters: In addition to being fully healed, the storm giant's sword is a blade of *spell storing* and has a *vampiric touch* (CL 7th) in that he unleashes at the first PCs to engage him.

16th-Level Characters: Tsurai's first mate (and lover) Tsetura bursts out of the lower hold and joins the battle on the 3rd round. Tsetura is also a storm giant but is slightly wounded and only has 151 hit points.

Once the storm giant captain is dealt with, the PCs have turned the tide of battle. The drow are wrapping up their own skirmishes as well, putting down their humanoid foes and gathering back together at the stern end of the main deck.

This is where the PCs first meet Raven, the man who can lead them to their destined role in the battle for Stormreach and a way to save hundreds of lives from the fires claiming the city. Do not force this meeting, but when the PCs seem ready and they are out of combat, continue on.

The black armored man slowly climbs to his feet, leaning on a finely wrought sword with a stylized wing hilt. One of his eyes is hidden by a patch of tooled black scorpion shell and his right arm is completely wrapped in bandages of storm grey silk.

"You've my thanks, strangers. I'm not sure why you're here, but your timing could not have been better."

Raven gladly talks with the PCs, but his chief concern are the dark elves that came here with him. He moves to the gathering quickly, conferring with a graceful, black skinned woman before sparing the PCs much of a thought again. This woman, T'maya, is a drow priestess of Vulkoor, and the drow here are under her command. She, it would seem, is for some reason under his.

Once he knows his people are safe, Raven turns his attention back to the PCs. He is grateful enough to answer any questions they have, but they must to ask. Left to his own devices, he intends to get supplies aboard the *Adamant* and set sail for Stormreach. He does not assume the PCs are going to aid him in this attack, but given their help with the captain of the ship, he does not refuse them. If they discuss the Prophecy or mention their factions at all (or if their interactions would prompt him to do so in your opinion), he takes them aside to talk.

In this way (or in whatever way you decide to provide the information depending on how the PCs interact), the PCs are introduced to Raven, the former leader of the Table. See "Enter the Raven" below for this introduction scene and move to the next section of the adventure.

7. The Sea Gate

Once a stately causeway that sheltered the harbor along its northern side, this broken passage serves no apparent purpose and does not lead anywhere any longer. It now acts as a dangerous barrier between the cove's cliff walls in the distance and passage to the ocean.

The walkway once stretched between a set of islands in front of the cove. With its sundering from time and the elements, it now acts to deter casual traffic and is one of the reasons the cove has remained undiscovered for so long. Raven knows the secret path that allows safe passage in and out of the sea gate, but any other captain or crew would have to make a DC 25 Profession (sailor) check to get through the obstruction without taking severe damage to their ship's hull.

The sea gate is just slightly farther north than the map shows, about half an inch above the northeastern corner of the image as shown.

8. The Sunken Ships

Arching up over the still waters of the cove, several hulls and masts rise in flames against the night sky. The first wave of the attack that rages on the metal clad ship at the docks must have taken these ships out first, sending each to a watery grave in this shallow cove.

One of Raven's allies is a drow firebringer, a powerful weapon in a naval battle. By knowing which ship to target with the firebringer's most powerful spells, he was able to detonate the fleet's pitch carrier and take out three other support vessels in a single volley.

None of the ships are salvageable and their crews are all quite dead. The attack was precise, sudden and incredible effective.

Enter the Raven

"I came here from Sharn, hoping to warn your city of the trouble coming its way. Perhaps I was too confident, but I honestly thought I could make it to Stormreach. I was wrong.

"My name is Raven, and I hail from Breland. I fear my presence here heralds disaster for your home. There is a terrible force of ships and soldiers on their way to Stormreach as we speak. I am hoping to use this ship to intercept one of their most important vessels and disrupt their entire attack."

The PCs likely inform him that it is too late for him to stop the assault. This news comes as a harsh blow. Even so, this only spurs him to move faster. If the attack is underway, he can still make a difference, and if the PCs agree to help him, he can do even more than he had hoped before.

"That is disheartening. I had hoped to still catch them while they were at sea and spare the city the Table's direct assault. But all is not lost. I know how to cripple them still. If you aid me, we might be able to strike at both the people controlling that horrid beast and the heart of their navy – the End of Days. Will you hear me out?"

Raven's Proposal

"I know this ship well. Under my command, she travels faster than you might believe. My original plan had been to send her at ramming speed against the Table's cultist transport, the Khyber's Shadow. In truth, I did not expect to walk away from such an attack, but it would have assured their destruction as well. Now there may be a chance, together, for us to accomplish even more.

"If you agree to spearhead the assault, I can get you to the Khyber's Shadow, cripple her with a sideswipe from the Adamant, and send you aboard to finish the occult lords while they focus their will on the Doom of the Deep. The Adamant has a short range device that can transport you directly aboard. Once there, my signet will get you past the main ward on the conjuring deck.

"The Khyber's Shadow bears escape craft you can use to escape her before she sinks. Once free of the ship, you can make your way back to Stormreach or do whatever mayhem you choose to the rest of the Table's armada. The Adamant, my allies and I will be engaging the End of Days head on. If we both succeed, we will kill this serpent at both head and tail.

"What say you?"

What Raven Can Tell the PCs

The PCs can finally get some answers to the mysteries that have likely been plaguing them since the beginning of the adventure. While they must ask their questions while Raven shouts orders to his dark elf crew, they have earned his compliance and he tells them all he knows.

- **"Who are you really?"** *"I am who I said I was – Raven, a soldier from Breland. If that is not enough for you, think of me as someone who once had a seat at the Table, the same conspiracy that now threatens your home. I am doing all I can to make amends for my role in all this."*
- **"What is the Table?"** *"Once, the Table was founded to ensure that the city of Stormreach was an open haven as it was meant to be. Over time, the purpose shifted to a nobler end. We took steps to secure power in the city so that it could never become a staging ground for those who would threaten the fragile peace of Thronehold. I believed that such power would remain bent to that aim. I was wrong.*
- **"Who are the powers behind the Table?"** *"The faces are not as important as the interests they represent but there are some people whose names you should know."*
 - **Guiver'lan:** *"Guiver'lan is a member of House Tharashk, a businessman and a very shrewd negotiator. He is not impressive physically, but there is an air of menace about him I have never quite understood."*

- **Baron ir’Korsht:** *“As tall as me and almost half again as broad, this red-haired mountain of a man is as fiery in temperament as you would expect but far more intelligent than most would think. His loyalties have always gone to the man in charge of the Table, and right now that is Guiver’lan. At least half of the ground forces the Table intends to use against Stormreach come from his tribes or their enslaved humanoids.”*
- **Seryath:** *“I have never trusted this elven spy. He changes faces as often as he does roles, and he has done almost every kind of clandestine work you can imagine for the Table. I suspect this necromantic snake is part of the reason my warnings never got to Stormreach. Bastard.”*
- **Hollyavra d’Jorasco:** *“Hollyavra is proof that a healer is not necessarily a kind person. I had always hoped that if I had to make a split from the Table, she would come with me, but I think I knew she would not. Her branch of House Jorasco has too much to gain if they retain sole rights to the health trade in Stormreach once the Table refounds it.”*
- **Veleste:** Raven does not immediately mention Veleste, though it is obvious to any PC making a DC 20 Sense Motive check that there is someone he almost names among this list. It takes a DC 20 Diplomacy check or solid roleplaying to convince him to speak of her.
 - *“Veleste is an enigma, even to me. Sometimes kind, sometimes cruel, she is still very important to me. If she has made her choice of whom to support, so be it, but I would like to see her life spared in all this if such could be possible.”*
- **“How did you get involved with the drow?”** *“My ship capsized on my way to Stormreach, and I washed ashore. These coastal, sea-faring drow found me unconscious in the grasp of a massive jade claw. I do not understand the details, but to the dark elves, it is some kind of divine sign. They serve me now, and while I am not sure why, they seem utterly loyal. Who am I to refuse troops, especially now?”*
- **“Why did you betray the Table?”** *“I did not betray the Table. It betrayed itself when it became a tool of conquest for greedy men and women interested more in profit than peace. I tried to guide it back to its ideals, and when I saw the disease of greed had gone to deep, I excised myself before it could corrupt me as well.”*

Raven does not force the PCs to come with him and, if they ask, he provides them with the *Adamant’s* life boat so they can make their way to Stormreach on their own. He warns them that going there now is incredibly dangerous, but they must be free to make their own decisions. Raven has learned his lesson about conquest. Unless people serve him willingly, he is through trying to rule them.

Once the PCs are ready to proceed (presumably into the next section of the adventure), continue to Part Three, The Shadow of Khyber.

Abandoning the Flight

The PCs must be allowed to make their own choices here. The module is written to heavily suggest that they continue with Raven into the next part, but to avoid ‘railroading’ them into such a choice, other options must be made available.

The most likely path for them is to take the lifeboat offered by Raven and try to make their own way to Stormreach. A small vessel might be able to make its way past the edge of the Table’s armada and reach the city, allowing the PCs to take part in the battle raging there. The cove is close enough that the PCs could reach Stormreach before dawn, making this an alternative if you wish to provide it for the players.

The PCs may also want to take on the flagship of the Table’s fleet, the *End of Days* itself. This is not a good idea for many reasons, including the fleet surrounding the *End of Days*. The odds of the PCs making it through a flotilla of warships and galleons without being seen are very slim, and even if they do reach the *End of Days* without incident, they would face a formidable floating base with its wards intact. There is a chance for the PCs to strike at the lords of the Table in the second half; now is not the time for such heroics.

As before, if the PCs just wish to take the lifeboat and flee the area, they are welcome to do so. This choice insures their survival, but it also removes them from the campaign and invalidates them from playing Part Two of Endgame.

Read the second cut scene now.

Part Three: In the Shadow of Khyber

Raven's plan takes the PCs speeding across the dark waves between the abandoned cove and the rear flanks of the Table's armada in less than an hour, a feat made possible by its magical enhancements and the skill of its dark elf crew.

The waves slash apart against the bladed keel of the Adamant. Moving at a speed even greater than the lighting pace of a soarwood vessel, the warship makes short work of the many miles between where you were and the massive fleet looming ever closer on the horizon.

"They are expecting us to be friendly!" Raven shouts out to you. "We should be able to come right alongside our quarry, but just in case, seek shelter against the battlements!"

The quarry he refers to is a long, darkwood ship with black and red sails at the rear of the armada – the *Khyber's Shadow*. Rendered impervious to normal weapons, the occult vessel proves quite vulnerable to the adamantite blade of the *Adamant's* port side swipe, as the PCs are about to learn.

The Adamant moves in fast, getting close enough to reveal the expressions of the sailors up in the rigging of the Khyber's Shadow's deck. These quickly change from relief and curiosity at seeing your approach to raw surprise and panic as you close the distance without slowing down at all. The drow brace for impact as Raven steers the ship dangerously close to the Khyber's Shadow, intending to lay her open with a slash of the warship's cutting blade.

"Be ready to use the boarding arch! You'll only have a few seconds!" The one-eyed captain bows his head to you in respect. "Good fortune and good hunting. I pray we meet again in peace."

The boarding arch is a doorway on the *Adamant's* main deck with the power to cast a line-of-sight *dimension door* on anyone moving through it. This spell effect creates a glowing portal at the target spot, a stationary point determined by the crewman operating the arch at the time. This device sends the PCs directly onto the main deck of the *Khyber's Shadow*, beginning the location-based encounter described below.

The Adamant swings hard against the side of the Khyber's Shadow. Darkwood planks are severed across the waterline as the Adamant's scything port-side blade scores a critical blow. In the same moment, the drow crew unleashes a withering volley of fire, boomerangs and spells that catch the enemy ship's crew completely by surprise. Those that do not fall to the attack are forced into the ocean, churned under the waves by the wake of their own ship.

"Go now! Your gods be with you!"

The Khyber's Shadow

This vessel is specifically designed to house the Table's occult assets in safety and channel their abilities into the Stormreach assault. Part galleon, part arcane foci and part magically empowered warship, the *Khyber's Shadow* has a number of defenses designed to ensure that the cultists aboard are protected for as long as they are needed to ensure the Table's victory.

The first layer of defense for the *Khyber's Shadow* is its warded main deck. The deck has several fields and mundane barriers designed to make direct assault incredibly difficult. PCs seeking to board the ship start at the empty square on the map marked with a yellow oval (assuming they came aboard through the teleporting arch on the *Adamant*). They must then contend with the following defensive fields if they intend to reach the stairs leading down into the Control Deck (the deck marked by a red seven pointed star):

Each field is set off by contact with the deck. Not making physical contact (*flying* for instance) will allow a given PC to avoid the effect of a given trapped square.

- **Weaken Deck:** This section of the deck is linked to a *wave of fatigue* spell (CL 9th). Any PC moving into or through this area must make a successful Reflex saving throw (DC 15) or be caught in the wavering area of effect filling this square. Each round spent in the square results in another saving throw being necessary. Once a PC fails the save, the effect takes hold.
- **Caltrops:** This area of the deck has been shaped with wood and metal warping magic to create the effect of caltrops scattered all over the ground. These caltrops cannot be moved as they are a growth along the surface of the deck itself but they can be avoided normally (by going at half speed or slower). The incredible sharp edges of these caltrops negate the usual AC bonus for shoes.
- **Grease:** This part of the main deck has been enchanted with a permanent *grease* effect as per the spell. The pitch and roll of the deck makes this especially dangerous as any PC that fails the saving throw against this effect and falls automatically slides forward or back (50% chance of either) into another 10-foot area, suffering whatever danger may rest there. If this movement would

send the PC into a solid wall or other obstruction (like a lifeboat), the PC takes 2d6 bludgeoning damage and stays in the *grease* area.

- **Ejection Trap:** This area of the hold is a localized *reverse gravity* field and sends PCs moving into the 10 foot square up through air to a height of 100 feet. Because the ship is in motion, this means that the next round, the PC plummets back, missing the ship completely and falling into the ocean. There are enough rigging ropes and deck surfaces to allow a Reflex saving throw as described in the *reverse gravity* spell entry.
- **Trapped Rails:** Any contact with the ship's outer railing causes an electric shock as per a *shocking grasp* spell at CL 5 (5d6 electrical damage). The melee attack is automatic, though PCs wearing and carrying less than 10 lbs. of metal suffer only half damage.

Getting to the stairs does not immediately allow the PCs to access the rest of the ship. The door to the stairs is covered by a powerful self-renewing *wall of force* barrier and a deadly trap. The signet ring given to one of the PCs by Raven (assuming they have it) lowers the *wall of force* for a full minute, but the trap is new and cannot be bypassed the same way. The presence of the signet means that the PCs can detect this trap even if they do not have a rogue or other character with the Trapfinding class feature.

Thunderous Words of Discorporation: CR 12; magic device; proximity trigger (*detect law* and *detect chaos*); automatic reset; spell effects (*word of chaos* and *dictum* 13th-level cleric, *greater shout* 15th-level wizard); Search DC 30; Disable Device DC 30. Neutral characters suffer only one set of effects from the *word* and *dictum* spells.

Past the trapped doorway, the stairs lead down into the PCs' goal, the Conjuring Deck. Read this description to the PCs when they arrive:

This large chamber is bathed in the light of candles and glowing sigils. The floor is inlaid in red lines that glimmer and flare as if they were cut of pure, flowing lava. At the end of each of seven points of the huge inlaid star, a figure in robes hovers a foot off the ground.

Each figure is murmuring, hands upraised and eyes closed. These spellcasters seem to be lost in their focus, all their attention and power concentrated upon a flickering image in the heart of the glowing star. There, the great beast devastating the harbor of Stormreach hangs over the red-lit deck, bands of energy surrounding it as each of these occult figures continue to bind it with their magic.

The cult lords themselves would be formidable opponents but they have dedicated all of their energy to the task of keeping the Doom of the Deep under control. They are essentially helpless and could be slain without difficulty or otherwise neutralized if the PCs were free to do so.

Unfortunately, the PCs are not exactly free to slaughter the cult lords and they are not quite as helpless as they appear. The hold has guardians, creatures bound to protect the cult lords while they work. If the PCs wish to end the threat these vile casters pose, they have to get past their guardians either before, during or after. One way or another, they have a cat fight on their hands.

Foes: The guardians for the cult circle are bezekira, hellcats bound to each one and entrusted with the safety of their masters. Hellcats are all cunningly intelligent and these particular ones are even more so, automatically using tactics like flanking and aid another as needed. They each try to start the battle on a different PC, however, since they are dreadfully bored and all want to relish the fun of combat. They do not gang up on foes until the third round.

Though they have numbers on their side, each hellcat is hardly a match for an average group of high-level PCs. Their presence here is as a substantial but relatively minor challenge for the PCs, one that should be defeated without much trouble.

The cult lords have been drawn from several different lands and represent fringe religions and brutal magical traditions of many sorts. They are unable to defend themselves in this scene and can be easily killed but, if you are so inclined, they deserve to have a tangible presence in the scene. Feel free to be creative in how you describe them, mixing in exotic races, body features, even adding grafts and mutations if you wish. At least one of the cultists should be human but beyond that, use your imagination.

Guardian Beasts (7): mixed male and female hellcats; hp 66 each; *Monster Manual* 54.

The Cult Lords (7): mixed male and female mixed race cleric 15 or sorcerer 15 or wizard 15; hp currently 15 from physical draining during spellcasting; helpless and exhausted.

Scaling the Encounter

11th-Level Characters: From her place of safety, Veleste helps the PCs whether they know it or not. Every other round starting on round three, she uses *invisibility* and her *outsider bane* dagger to take out one hellcat until there are only three left. Only six attack the PCs when the encounter begins.

12th-Level Characters: As 11th level but all seven begin the attack.

14th-Level Characters: No change.

15th-Level Characters: The hellcats were summoned using augmented magic and all have 90 hit points.

16th-Level Characters: As 15th with the addition of a *true strike* effect on each hellcat's first round of attacks and a +1 morale bonus to attack and damage rolls every round thereafter.

If the PCs defeat the bezekira, they can deal with the cult lords in any way they wish. Be sure to note that the ship is already beginning to list to the starboard side. It is taking on water and does not remain afloat long. The PCs must decide on their course of action quickly if they intend to escape before the *Khyber's Shadow* sinks beneath the waves forever.

One factor that may complicate the issue is the presence of an eighth defender, someone left aboard the ship by Guiver'lan's decree and also charged with the safety of the cultists. An assassin named Veleste is hidden in the shadows in the northeastern corner of the chamber, watching the PCs as they fight. Her actions entirely depend on how the PCs act and whether they have Raven's signet. Seeing it gives her sudden hope that Raven may be alive and as such, she chooses to switch sides.

A whispered, feminine voice echoes out of the shadows on the north side of the chamber. "Do not be alarmed, but I must ask. Where did you get that ring?" The speaker is nowhere to be seen, as invisible as the cats that just assailed you.

PCs may very well have the ability to see her. If that is the case, make it clear that she is not a threat. If Veleste is confronted or attacked, she tries to evade the PCs without harming them, all the while repeating her question. She is more than capable of defending herself but she does not want to fight. Right now, all she desires is to know what became of Raven.

Veleste: female human rogue 5/assassin 8; hp 80.

Veleste has no intention of fighting the PCs but fights to defend herself if she must. It should be very evident to the PCs that she is fighting reluctantly and that if they press the attack, they are not engaged in combat; they are committing murder. This may not dissuade all PCs but it should allow Veleste to impart the following in an attempt to save her life or bargain for her escape.

If the PCs listen to her from the start, she offers this information to them as her attempt to make up for some of the damage she has caused over the years. She is hopeful to learn of Raven's fate, but even if she does not, she is determined to try and find him now.

"It looks like this ship is going down. Good riddance. If you want a way out, I know of a fast one that might serve you better than the little boat up top. Interested?"

"Good. See the image of that horror at Stormreach? It's not just an illusion. It acts like a gate, a channel for the power these sick cultists needed to keep that thing bound. With them dead and gone, the beast will break free and hopefully lose some of its protections in the process.

The cowed woman steps closer. "I know how the image gate works. If you want, I can use it to send you to where the cult was getting their power. It's under Stormreach, and unless they are all dead, there are dozens, maybe hundreds, of people to be saved." She shrugs. "If nothing else, you'll be a lot closer to home, right?"

If the PCs agree, Veleste steps into the star and use her Use Magic Device skill to shift the image gate back to the sacrificial chamber from where the cult was drawing its power. This changes the illusion to look like this:

The image shimmers, becoming a dark room surrounded in stone. Many figures crouch in the shadows while a larger one moves between them, walking on strange, bladed legs. In the middle of the room, there appears to be a large stone with lines of light crawling over its surface. Many of the lines seem to begin or end in pools of blood!

"I know it looks bad, but if it helps, I'll go first." And just like that, she reaches out, touches the image and vanished, pulled through in a blur of light and flutter of dark cloth.

The gate has taken Veleste to the Chamber of Blood, the first section of Part Four: Acts of Sacrifice. The PCs are under no obligation to follow, but if they do not they will have to make their own way home using the unpowered lifeboat on the main deck. Once in the water, they must chart their own course and deal with

the fact that they are behind enemy lines with a huge fleet between them and the only good port (albeit one that is currently on *fire*) for hours in any direction.

Read the third cut scene now.

Part Four: Acts of Sacrifice

This is the last section of the adventure, and if you are running this adventure in a 4-hour time slot, there should be roughly an hour remaining. This section is centered on the battle beneath Stormreach to free the Table's sacrificial prisoners and the PCs' run to escape the collapsing tunnel before the war going on over their heads claims them as victims as well.

The harsh transport from the rippling image gate to wherever you have ended up is a painful one, a wrenching experience that leaves you staggering and disoriented for several dangerously vulnerable moments afterward. Fortunately, your point of arrival seems to be well hidden, and no foe has taken notice of you yet.

Veleste, the cloaked woman from the Khyber's Shadow, stands before you, her back to the wall and a finger to her lips. She points into the darkness of the room beyond, singling out a lumbering shape backlit by the faint glow of a sacrificial altar.

Veleste is pointing at the room's retriever, a deadly creature summoned and bound to the task of feeding the room's soul engine by placing prisoners on it and ensuring that the supply of blood and spirit energy never stops. It is single minded in its task and does not recognize that the PCs are anything other than more prisoners for the slaughter until it is attacked (providing them with an automatic surprise round).

Then she gestures to one side of the room, pointing toward a large door with a set of closed iron bars across it. Holding up an ornate metal key, she makes a turning motion in the air with it and bows a quick goodbye. Without a word, she pulls up her hood and slips into the shadows of the chamber, melting in without a trace.

Her meaning should be clear; Veleste intends to use the key, which she stole off one of the Cult Lords several hours ago, to open the sacrificial vault and make her escape from this place. She does not aid the PCs in their fight against the retriever, since their battle buys her the time she needs to get out of here and on her way to the surface. Once there, she intends to find some way to rejoin Raven if she can.

The PCs are on their own, facing a powerful demonic beast with the fate of hundreds of captured Stormreach citizens in their hands.

Creatures: The room is filled with cages, all of which are open and filled with people from all walks of life in the city above. For several days, agents of the Table have been kidnapping these people and imprisoning them down here without food or water, intending them as sacrifices to keep the cult lords aboard the *Khyber's Shadow* flush with sacrificial energy for the main assault. In the large cavern to the west of this room, there are many more prisoners, all caged and unable to escape. When the retriever is done with the people in this chamber, it intends to go to more cages and continue the sacrifices without delay.

There are more than three hundred people of various races, ages and social classes in this chamber and the cavern beyond, all *fatigued* and frightened out of their wits. Until the retrievers are dealt with, they are considered *terrified* and cannot move.

Foe: The retriever is very focused on its work, unable to tell the difference between PC and prisoner as it moves through the room, grabbing victim after victim and placing them on the Altar of the Soul Engine. It is utterly dispassionate about this task; it is doing as it was summoned and bound to do. It cannot be reasoned with and it neither offers surrender nor asks for it.

The Soul Warden; retriever demon; hp 200; *Monster Manual* 64.

Shackle: kyton (chain demon); hp 55; *Monster Manual* 53. Only present at EL 16.

Altar of the Soul Engine; vile occult object; hp 101; can only be damaged with *holy* effects, *light* effects or adamantite/epic physical attacks.

Tactics: In battle, this retriever does not use its eye rays against any PC that is between it and a group of huddling prisoners because of its orders to keep them alive until they can be sacrificed. Therefore, its chief tactic is to grapple and carry, moving 10 feet per round once it has a creature pinned. If it can reach the altar while carrying someone, it can drop them on it as a free action at the start of its next turn.

Development: The Altar of the Soul Engine may be the most deadly aspect of this encounter. Any non-outsider living creature that comes into the squares covered by the ten foot wide altar must immediately make a Fortitude saving throw (DC 25) or be *paralyzed* for 10 rounds. At the end of each round (starting with the end of the round in which the subject was paralyzed), the creature suffers 2 points of Constitution drain and 1 point of Wisdom drain. Both effects are temporary, but if either score drops to 0, the victim dies and its body is consumed by the altar. Outsiders and warforged are immune to the altar's effects.

Scaling the Encounter

11th-Level Characters: The retriever's summoning was not as effective as the cult lords had desired; it only has 140 hit points.

12th-Level Characters: As 11th level but the retriever has 170 hit points.

14th-Level Characters: Instead of one 200 hit point retriever, there are two 140 hit point retrievers. The second one starts at the center of the north wall and enters combat when either one is attacked.

15th-Level Characters: Both retrievers have 200 hit points.

16th-Level Characters: As 15th with the addition of a kytton bound to the altar. It cannot leave the 5 foot area around the Altar of the Soul Engine and only attempts to grapple PCs in the effect squares of the altar as its action in combat if at all possible. If the kytton is present, the altar has four chains, one anchored to each corner.

Once the retrievers are defeated, the prisoners can be evacuated. As is evident in the description of the aftermath of the battle, this would be an incredibly good idea.

The death of the retrievers causes the magic of the altar to fail catastrophically, sending arcs of spiritual energy into the ceiling and damaging the integrity of the chamber. Read or paraphrase the following text when you are ready to proceed.

The death of the bladed demon sends a shockwave through the room, a pulse of energy that makes the altar surge violently. Arcs of darkness crackle over its surface, slashing towards the ceiling of the chamber as the altar splinters as if detonating from within. An ominous sound, the low thunder of some hellish power about to be unleashed, slowly builds in the air around the vile edifice.

High above, the ceiling cracks and chunks of stone begin to plummet to the ground.

If this description does not get the PCs moving, the screams of terror by the prisoners all around them should do so. The prisoners are *fatigued* and cannot run but even normal movement gets them out of the chamber in a hurry. If the PCs do not lead them out, they still try to reach the now-open exit but many are trampled in their mad panic.

This is not so much an encounter or challenge as it is a roleplaying opportunity for the PCs. If they try to show any leadership, the weary mob of prisoners eagerly obeys, as long as it is obvious the main order of business is getting out of the sacrificial vault.

Fleeing the Scene

Once the PCs are out of the vault and on their way out, read or paraphrase the following sections to them. These can and should be interspersed with letting the PCs interact with the refugees they are leading, getting them desperately needed water and food as they run, taking care of wounds and anything else they need or wish to do.

These people are desperate and afraid; it is the perfect time for the PCs to establish themselves as heroes of Stormreach (or at least heroes of opportunism, since even evil PCs can benefit from the good will of hundreds of people at once).

The tunnel shakes, people screaming in panic as dust pours down from above you. Something massive just slammed into the ground above, hitting so hard that shoring timbers across the ceiling of the tunnel just snapped.

In the distance, the tunnel collapses in a rain of shattered stone and broken debris. Though no one was caught in the cave-in, the near miss causes the refugees in the back to bolt in fear, nearly trampling those in front of them. Through the dense earth above, you can still hear the muffled sound of a terrifying roar, a sound so intense that the stone around you shudders from the force of it.

Foundation timbers jutting out of the ceiling above you are raining down droplets of hissing pitch. Whatever building they are attached to must be ablaze, the heat of the conflagration enough to make the air down here uncomfortably hot. Smoke has already started to sink through the cracked earth, carrying with it the stench of the burning dead.

Use your own creativity to show the PCs glimpses of the devastation above them as seen from underground, all the while giving them reasons to keep moving. They are actually in no danger of being

trapped down here, but they do not know that. Let the PCs feel as if every step is vital to their survival. It adds to the tone of this final scene.

When you are ready to bring the scenario to a close, proceed to Stormrider's final message below.

As you move through the rapidly collapsing tunnel, hundreds of men, women and children behind you, a sudden pressure moves through your minds. Words echo, first as a whisper then as a voice almost painfully loud: the roar of a dragon, reaching out to contact you from many miles away.

"The city may be lost. Save who you can. Flee to the Hold of Light. My child will lead you. Live now to fight later! Be brave and sell your lives dearly, pawns of prophecy."

Move to Ending the Adventure.

Ending the Adventure

Shortly after hearing Stormrider's last message, they emerge from the old aqueduct tunnel outside the city of Stormreach. This is what they see:

The exit to the tunnel is a jagged arch of broken stone and rusted metalwork. Around you, the ground is rough and overgrown, a forgotten mouth of a long-abandoned aqueduct whose tunnels sprawl under much of Stormreach. You have made it out of the collapsing old waterway just as more of it surrenders to the forces of the battle raging in the streets behind you.

From a nearby column of worked granite, a blue shape raises its scaled head and looks toward you. "Come," Scribe says in a low, rumbling voice. "Father says there is little time. I must take you to the only shelter that remains in this place."

He folds his wings and moves quickly, draconic talons easily propelling him over the ruined cobblestones of the aqueduct's eroded slope. "Father has secured your shelter in Radiant Hold, the fortress of light not far away. We need only get there in one piece. Come!"

With the PCs presumably following the young dragon to their promised sanctuary, this half of Endgame is finished. Remind the PCs that their event treasure (if any) rolls over to the next round, and distribute the story object below. All surviving PCs receive the story object.

Read the last cut scene now.

In the distance behind you, a massive shape moves across the sky. An airship, the largest you have ever seen, comes hurtling down out of the smoke clouds above Stormreach. Fires burning across the ship's hull as it dived, the vessel's course is clear.

It slams into the Doom of the Deep like a hammer of the Gods, the impact so powerful that the creature is lifted off its feet and sent flying back into the harbor, impaled on the front of the crippled ship. As they both hit the water, the vessel explodes, a wave of flame and force that craters the ocean and sets the horizon ablaze!

Even the young dragon is transfixed by the sight of the titan's demise. He recovers quickly, however. "Quickly now! The death of the great beast will buy us the time we need to get to safety. The battle is not yet over. The danger is not yet past!"

"Hurry!"

Here ends **First Strike**, round one of **Endgame**.

Appendix One: Player Handouts

Player Handout One

These messages begin the adventure for the PCs. Distribute them at the start of play.



Command Missive: Company Members Only!

Effective immediately, you are being deployed into autonomous field duty and must report to a domicile at the address of 24 Scorpion Lane. Once there, move with haste to the basement of the building and await further instructions.

Operatives from other organizations, some of whom you might know, may be awaiting you there or will arrive shortly after. Consider these individuals to be additional assets in your mission. Do not leave the above noted location until you are contacted by headquarters again; we have multiple operations in the works and there may be a delay getting your primary orders to you.

Move with all haste, soldier. The situation is more dire than you know.

You are dismissed into service,

Company Headquarters



Greetings, Paragon.

It seems far too soon for me to be giving orders but the terrible events unfolding in Stormreach require me to do so before I am comfortable with my new role in the Covenant. Regardless, I have to step into our Lord's boot sometime and the present is not allowing me the luxury of taking things slowly.

We have received word of a gathering of operatives and agents from other factions in the city. They must know what we do and are marshalling forces. We need you to go to the basement of the house at 24 Scorpion Lane and offer the Covenant of Light's aid to whatever strike team they have assembled. If the prophecy fragments are being interpreted correctly here, they will need you more than this city ever has before.

I will send further information as soon as we have it.

Be careful as Xandrin would have said. Be vigilant,

Lord Xandrin Corvalis



Heed the Cabal's Words!

Read this closely. Once more, signs and portents have been leading up to a coming darkness, one from which even we might not escape. Despite our oaths and parts, there are forces of destruction with which none can bargain. In these dire times, we are again forced to act for preservation's sake.

You must go to the stonewalled house at 24 Scorpion Lane. It used to belong to a market vendor in considerable debt. He no longer owes anyone anything and the house is ours now. Go inside and make your way to the basement. Uncomfortable allies of convenience may be waiting there. We would prefer you to leave them all alive and useful for the moment.

Go, discover, report. Take no other actions without receiving further instructions from us. This includes strikes against the Covenant or any other city organization. Their time will come, sooner than anyone might think.

Blood and Darkness Forever,

->X<-



A Serpent's Missive

Heed this passage from the Fragments:
"Beneath the streets, a council of enemies,
Light and Dark and Steel and Scroll.
Each must seek the other's safe keeping.
Death of one means death of all."

Whatever this passage means, we suspect it has to do with a gathering of forces taking place beneath a house at 24 Scorpion Lane on the north side of the city. While we are not certain the purpose of this meeting, there are several seers in the Codex who believe this 'council of enemies' may hold the key to our surviving the coming storm that we have been expecting.

Go to the meeting, represent us as best you can and wait for more information. Keep an eye on the others. We cannot afford to miss even a single opportunity to act upon the Prophecy.

Above all, avoid any overt confrontations with other power groups in the city. We cannot afford the complications of such struggles at this time.

Wisdom and Foresight,

Candle

Appendix Two: Combat Statistics

The Doom of the Deep, Child of the Devourer (Spellwarped Tarrasque)

This creature is in no way intended as a combat challenge for the PCs. Its statistics are listed here merely as an aid to the DM in case they become relevant for some reason during play.

Size/Type:	Colossal Magical Beast
Hit Dice:	48d10+690 (954 hp)
Initiative:	+7
Speed:	20 ft. (4 squares)
Armor Class:	38 (-8 size, +4 Dex, +32 natural), touch 5, flat-footed 32
Base Attack/Grapple:	+48/+81
Attack:	Bite +59 melee (4d8+19/18-20/×3)
Full Attack:	Bite +59 melee (4d8+19/18-20/×3) and 2 horns +54 melee (1d10+10) and 2 claws +54 melee (1d12+10) and tail slap +52 melee (3d8+10)
Space/Reach:	30 ft./20 ft.
Special Attacks:	Augmented critical, frightful presence, improved grab, rush, swallow whole
Special Qualities:	Carapace, damage reduction 15/epic, immunity to fire, poison, disease, energy drain, and ability damage, regeneration 40, scent, spell resistance 32, spell absorption, divine vulnerability
Action Points:	15 (3d6)
Saves:	Fort +38, Ref +30, Will +20
Abilities:	Str 49, Dex 18, Con 39, Int 7, Wis 14, Cha 14
Skills:	Listen +17, Search +9, Spot +17, Survival +14 (+16 following tracks)
Feats:	Alertness, Awesome Blow, Blind-Fight, Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Great Cleave, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Power Attack, Toughness (6)
Environment:	Any
Organization:	Solitary
Challenge Rating:	23+
Treasure:	None
Alignment:	Always neutral

Combat

The tarrasque attacks with its claws, teeth, horns, and tail. The tarrasque's natural weapons are treated as epic weapons for the purpose of overcoming damage reduction.

Augmented Critical (Ex) The tarrasque's bite threatens a critical hit on a natural attack roll of 18-20, dealing triple damage on a successful critical hit.

Frightful Presence (Su) The tarrasque can inspire terror by charging or attacking. Affected creatures must succeed on a DC 36 Will save or become shaken, remaining in that condition as long as they remain within 60 feet of the tarrasque. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Improved Grab (Ex) To use this ability, the tarrasque must hit a Huge or smaller opponent with its bite attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it establishes a hold and can try to swallow the foe the following round.

Rush (Ex) Once per minute, the normally slow-moving tarrasque can move at a speed of 150 feet.

Swallow Whole (Ex) The tarrasque can try to swallow a grabbed opponent of Huge or smaller size by making a successful grapple check. Once inside, the opponent takes 2d8+8 points of crushing damage plus 2d8+6 points of acid damage per round from the tarrasque's digestive juices. A swallowed creature can cut its way out by dealing 50 points of damage to the tarrasque's digestive tract (AC 25). Once the creature exits, muscular action closes the hole; another swallowed opponent must cut its own way out. The tarrasque's gullet can hold 2 Huge, 8 Large, 32 Medium, 128 Small, or 512 Tiny or smaller creatures.

Carapace (Ex) The tarrasque's armorlike carapace is exceptionally tough and highly reflective, deflecting all rays, lines, cones, and even magic missile spells. There is a 30% chance of reflecting any such effect back at the caster; otherwise, it is merely negated. Check for reflection before rolling to overcome the creature's spell resistance.

Regeneration (Ex) No form of attack deals lethal damage to the tarrasque. The tarrasque regenerates even if it fails a saving throw against a disintegrate spell or a death effect. If the tarrasque fails its save against a spell or effect that would kill it instantly (such as those mentioned above), the spell or effect instead deals nonlethal damage equal to the creature's full normal hit points +10 (or 868 hp). The tarrasque is immune to effects that produce incurable or bleeding wounds, such as mummy rot, a sword with the wounding special ability, or a clay golem's cursed wound ability.

The tarrasque can be slain only by raising its nonlethal damage total to its full normal hit points +10 (or 868 hit points) and using a wish or miracle spell to keep it dead. If the tarrasque loses a limb or body part, the lost portion regrows in 1d6 minutes (the detached piece dies and decays normally). The creature can reattach the severed member instantly by holding it to the stump.

Skills The tarrasque has a +8 racial bonus on Listen and Spot checks.

Spell Absorption (Su) If the Doom of the Deep's spell resistance negates a spell, it immediately gains its choice of one of the following. None of these bonuses stack:

- *Might*: +4 Enhancement bonus to Strength for 1 minute.
- *Agility*: +4 Enhancement bonus to Dexterity for 1 minute.
- *Endurance*: +4 Enhancement bonus to Constitution for 1 min.
- *Life*: Gains (5 x negated spell level) Temporary Hit-Points.
- *Speed*: Gains (5 x negated spell level)' to base movement.
- *Resistance*: Gain Energy Resistance 10 to one type of energy of the creature's choice
 - (either Acid, Cold, Electricity, Fire or Sonic).

Divine Vulnerability (Ex) The Doom of the Deep is a creature corrupted by the dark power of the Devourer itself, one of the gods of the Dark Six. Its power stems from this connection but it also suffers from the bond. If the Doom of the Deep's non-lethal damage total ever equals or exceeds its maximum hit points + 30 (984) while it is touching a natural water body of Xen'drik (sea, ocean, lake, river, etc.), it is slain instantly without the need for a *wish* or miracle spell.

Appendix - NPCs

Combat Statistics

Veleste, Silken Blade of the Table

CR 13

Human Rogue 5/Assassin 8

Neutral Evil Medium humanoid (human)

Init +5; **Senses** Listen +7, Search +7, Spot +7

Languages Common, Elven

AC 24, touch 15, flat-footed 19, Dodge, Mobility, Snatch Arrows

hp 80 (13 HD)

Resist +3 to saves against poison

Fort +4, **Ref** +15, **Will** +5

Action Points: 9 (d6)

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)

Melee +9/+4 unarmed (1d3 nonlethal) or

Melee +11/+6 +2 *dagger of outsider bane* (1d4+2, 19-20 x2) or

Melee +11/+6 +2 *dagger of human bane* (1d4+2, 19-20 x2) or

Melee +11/+6 +2 *keen adamantite dagger* (1d4+2, 17-20 x2)

Base Atk +9; **Grp** +9

Special Actions sneak attack +7d6, death attack, hide in plain sight, *doom* and *fear* (from *eyes of doom*)

Assassin Spells Known (CL 8th):

4th (1 per day): *dimension door*, *freedom of movement*, *glibness*

3rd (3 per day): *deeper darkness*, *false life*, *misdirection*, *nondetection*

2nd (4 per day): *alter self*, *cat's grace*, *invisibility*, *spider climb*

1st (4 per day): *feather fall*, *jump*, *sleep*, *true strike*

Abilities Str 10, Dex 20, Con 12, Int 15, Wis 14, Cha 16

SQ: trapfinding, trap sense +1, poison use, evasion, improved uncanny dodge

Feats: Dodge, Mobility, Combat Reflexes, Spring Attack, Stealthy, Persuasive

Skills Bluff +15, Climb +5, Craft (alchemy) +7, Diplomacy +18, Gather Information +13, Intimidate +13, Hide +27, Jump +5, Knowledge (nobility and royalty) +5, Knowledge (religion) +5, Listen +7, Move Silently +27, Profession (courtesan) +5, Ride +15, Search +7, Sense Motive +13, Spot +7, Tumble +15, Use Magic Device +13.

Gear: *cloak of displacement (minor)*, *boots of elvenkind*, *shadow glamered* leather armor +3 of *ease* (no arcane spell failure chance), ring of protection +4, *eyes of doom*, various poisons (seldom used), *gloves of arrow snaring*, *bead of force* (1)

Veleste is an enigma even to those who know her best. She is a courtesan, a killer, a conniving power broker of the first order and above all a lady. Elegant when she can be, brutal and vicious when she must be, Veleste is more than capable and willing to kill to achieve her ends. Her life, what little she reveals of it to those who think themselves her friends, has been rough enough to forge her into what she is today.

If the Table's silken assassin has one weakness, it is emotion. Specifically, emotion for one man in particular. Though she has managed to play her cards very close to her chest, this cold-as-ice slayer melts around her former leader, Raven the mercenary warlord. The two of them are most certainly a case of opposites attract; he is noble and genuinely concerned with the greater good. She is perfectly willing to do anything and everything to ensure that the greater good is what specifically benefits her the most.

Veleste finds herself at a crossroads in her life. With the Table, her chosen road to power for years, standing on the brink of victory, she has begun to question her own motivations and those of her colleagues because of Raven's departure and the travails he has undergone since leaving. Because she has only added to his hardships during this dark time, the lady assassin has started to feel something she never has before – guilt.

Combat Statistics

Raven, Mercenary Lord and Traitor to the Table

CR 15

Human Knight 15

LG Medium humanoid (human)

Init +1; **Senses** Listen +3, Search +2, Spot +3

Languages Common, Elven

AC 31, touch 17, flat-footed 30, 33 against a single target while carrying a shield

hp 170 (15 HD)

Resist immune to poison

Fort +10, **Ref** +6, **Will** +14

Action Points: 12 (d6)

Speed 40 ft. (8 squares)

Melee +15/+10/+5 unarmed (1d3 nonlethal or lethal, gauntlet) or

Melee +23/+18/+13 Gravewing (1d8+7, 17-20 x2) and/or

Melee +21/+16/+6 shield bash (1d8+6, x2)

Base Atk +15; **Gp** +20

Special Actions fighting challenge +3, knight's challenge (11 per day), shield block +2, test of mettle, call to battle, daunting challenge, improved shield ally

Abilities Str 20, Dex 12, Con 16, Int 14, Wis 16, Cha 18

SQ: knight's code, bulwark of defense, vigilant defender, armor mastery (medium, heavy)

Feats Leadership, Mounted Combat, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (long sword), Shield Specialization (heavy), Great Fortitude, Iron Will, Endurance, Diehard, Shield Ward

Skills Climb +10, Diplomacy +14, Handle Animal +13, Jump +5, Knowledge (nobility and royalty) +7, Knowledge (tactics) +7, Profession (stablehand) +8, Ride +16, Swim +10

Gear: (At the time of the PCs encounter) +4 *full plate* (wrought from black chitin and carapaces), +3 *heavy chitin shield of bashing*, *cloak of resistance* +3, *boots of striding and springing*, *amulet of natural armor* +3

Taken in at a young age and trained to be a squire by a kindly manor lord and ex-soldier, Raven grew up quickly and was taught to take responsibility for both his own actions and those of the people around him. These lessons stuck with the orphaned commoner child his entire life, finally reaching fruition when his master was slain on a distant battlefield and he was left in charge of a Brellish fief, a small standing army and hundreds of townsfolk looking for a lord. Rising to the challenge, Raven made a shining example of his lands in a time when many minor kingdoms fell or became corrupt.

Raven's success came to the attention of the Brellish nobility, many of whom became jealous of his successes while their own lands suffered from mismanagement. Determined to be rid of this base-blooded upstart, they conspired to get him noticed by the crown and recommended him for the "honor" of command. Determined to do no less than his mentor, Raven accepted the boon with pride and left his fief as duty demanded.

It was during the war that Raven became involved with the Table in its early days. He helped in its creation and guided it through its first few months through his combination of strong will, careful management and wise leadership. Everything that the Table has achieved can be laid at his feet in one form or another, a sad truth he will never allow himself to forget.

NEW MAGIC ITEM: Gravewing

Gravewing is a *soul blade*, one of thirteen similar magic weapons crafted by Karnath during the Last War. It was designed to give Karnathi warlords great advantage while also ensuring their loyalty to king and crown through necromantic and arcane means. This particular sword was captured when a Karnathi commander fell to Raven on the battlefield. Now in his hands, it lacks the power to influence him directly and he keeps it so as not to let its evil taint others.

Soul Blade: +2 *keen longsword*, AL NE; Int 17, Wis 17, Cha 10; Speech, telepathy, 120 ft. darkvision and hearing; Ego score 18.

Lesser Powers: *Faerie fire* 3/day, *cure moderate wounds* 3/day, *doom* continually active. 5% cumulative change per round of combat to cast *rage* on its bearer 1/day.

Dedicated Power: *Death ward* (bearer only, constant).

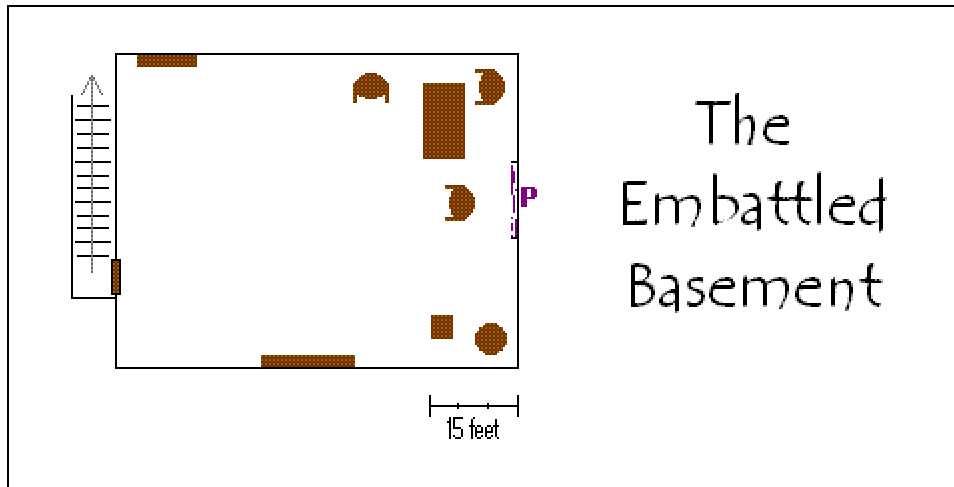
Personality: This *soul blade* has a malign intelligence

within it dedicated to the ascendancy of Karnath as the center of Khorvairian civilization and it will not rest until every other nation lies under Karnath's heel. While this *soul blade* cannot achieve dominance over Raven, it can and does make his every resting moment a nightmarish hell of ghostly images and the deaths of every being to fall to its edge. Raven's incredibly strong will is sufficient to keep the *soul blade's* personality suppressed most of the time, during great stress or in the heat of battle, its dark force of personality occasionally makes itself known though him by invoking a sort of grim bloodlust.

The *soul blade's* voice is thin and whispery, but its owner can hear it even amid the din of battle.

Strong transmutation; CL 15th; Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *cure moderate wounds*, *doom*, *faerie fire*, *death ward*;
Price 87,615 gp; **Cost** 43,965 gp + 3,492 xp.

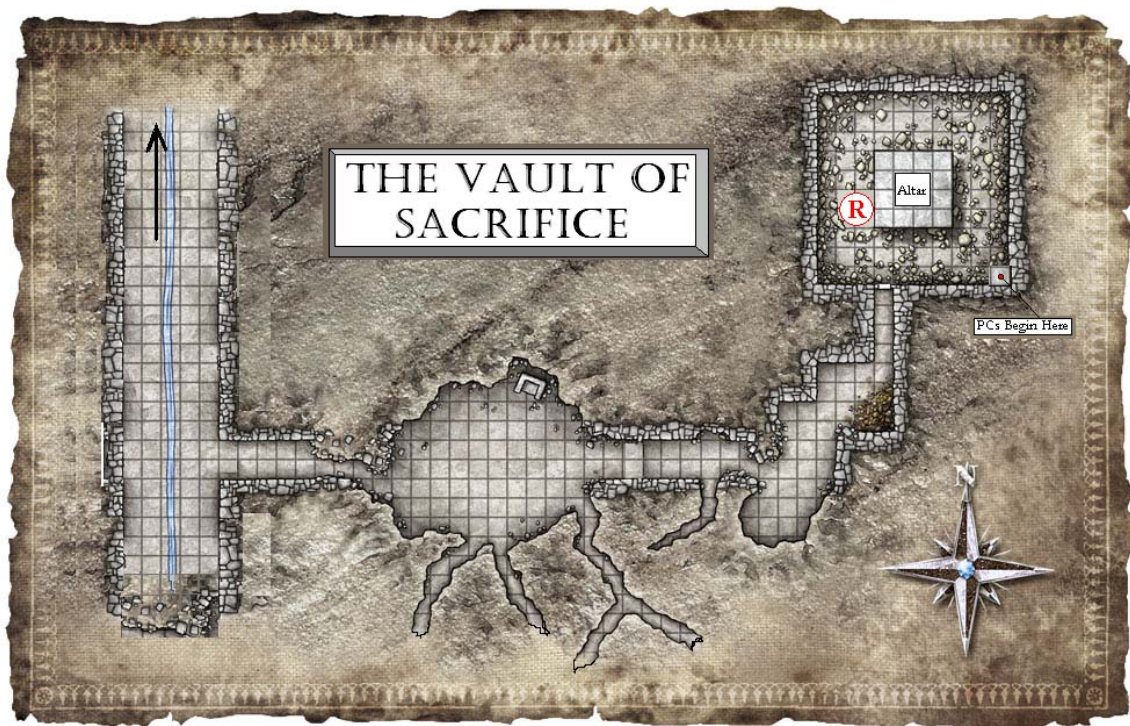
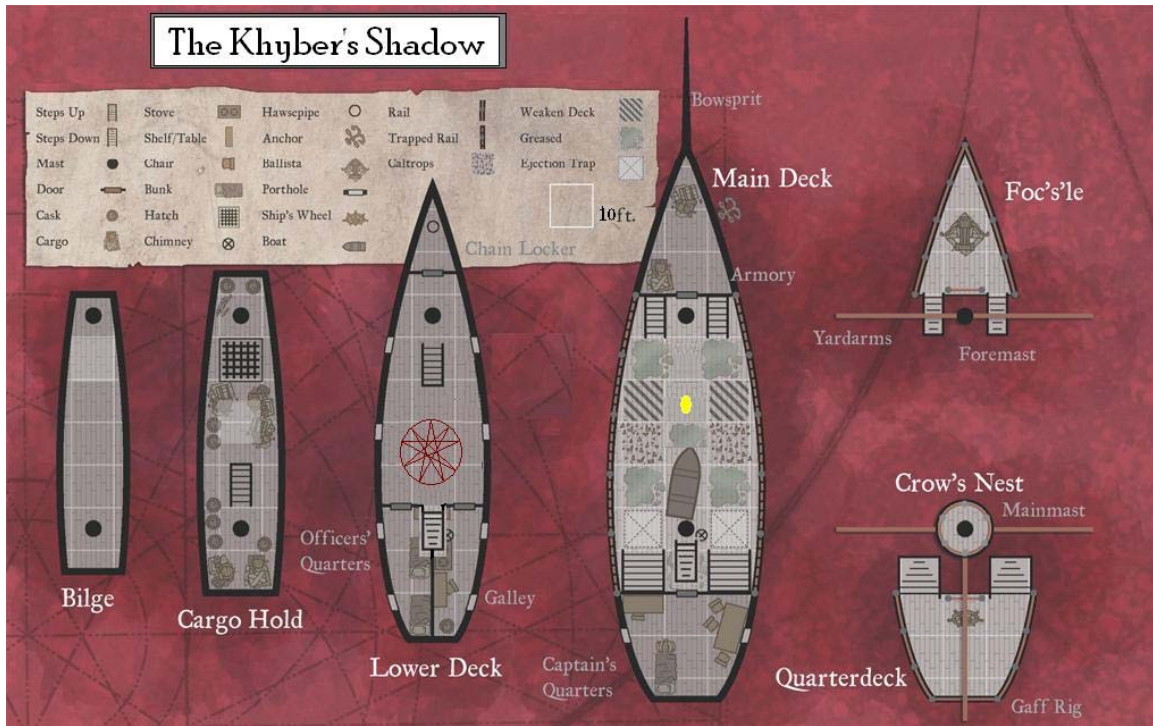
Appendix Three: Maps and Art



Map Key:

- | | |
|--------------------------|---------------------|
| 1: The Lonely Road | 5: A Long Walk |
| 2: Supply House | 6: The Adamant |
| 3: The Battered Fortress | 7: The Sea Gate |
| 4: The Watcher | 8: The Sunken Ships |

Black Wings, Red Sails



Appendix Four: Cut Scenes

First Scene

He was checking over crates of supplies when the alarm sounded. High pitched, it was a siren he had only heard once before. That was the clarion that meant the city itself was under attack. The last time it had come off, a crimson-garbed pirate had led her forces against Stormreach and done a lot of damage. The Blackwheel Company had been slow to mobilize that time, caught up in its internal politics and outside interests.

"What's going on?" His voice was a roar, one that easily carried through the cavernous cargo deck.

Someone piped up near the forward gantry. "Not sure, sir! First report is that something's come up out of the water and there are ships on the horizon. Sounds like the docks are getting smashed up real good!"

Crash was not about to let that happen again. There was no general order from on high to move but he did not need one. This was his command, at least for now, and the Wheel be damned if he was going to miss another fight!

"Off your tails, men! The Glory Road sure don't fly herself! I was this hulk turned around and moving by the time I reach the bridge!"

The big minotaur was pulling on his armor even as he stomped out of the hold. The people around him were already scurrying to complete his orders. They knew that look and they knew the man. If Sergeant Crash did not get his way, there was always the chance someone might be finding their way out a window. That had never actually happened before but it was a long way down.

No one wanted to take that chance.

"Look alive, all of you! Time to earn our danger pay!"

Second Scene

The sky was a mess.

There were small attack craft strafing Stormreach as far in as the marketplace. The mass of the enemy forces were out on the waves but there were enough flying ships to make a right mess of the city if they were not stopped. Those people down below with the power to help were doing so but they were outgunned and obviously taken by surprise.

Now it was his turn. Crash bellowed for a full barrage on the first ship in the Glory Road's sights. Magical cannon roared even louder than he could, turning the wood and steel raider into a cloud of bloody debris. Before the gunners could cheer their accuracy, Crash was already ordering them to reload and recharge. This was only the opening salvo. There would surely be more to come. More and worse.

The worse made itself known with a piercing howl that rattled the glass of the bridge's windows. Crash swung the ship's viewing globe and stared in disbelief at the behemoth standing half submerged in the city's harbor. It was the biggest thing he had ever seen, scaled like a dragon and shelled like a nightmare tortoise. Its body was harnessed in a set of massive chains, each link glowing with runes that were almost painful to look at too closely.

"What in Khyber is that?!"

Crash could not blame his navigator for the outburst. He was inwardly screaming the exact same thing. But there was no place for fear right now. Whatever it was, it was tearing the docks apart. The ships outside were a threat but that thing looked unstoppable.

Unstoppable, that is, to anything except something equally huge. If that monster wanted a fight, Crash was more than happy to oblige. The Glory Road had a new target.

"Get us to the dock now! Anything gets in the way, make it a smear on our bow!"

Third Scene

"Sir, we need to turn back. The ship's taken a lot of damage."

His first mate was right and Crash knew it. The Glory Road had become the target for every ship in the air and many of the spellcasting enemies on the ground. Her armor was burned and smoking, holed in several places and her airspeed was already suffering. The Glory Road had been through a lot over the years but right now she was hurting about as much as she ever had before.

"We turn back now and this was for nothing. That beast is shrugging off everything the city throws at it. I want to get it in range of our guns." Crash was being stubborn but for him, that was standard operating procedure. His soldiers knew better than to argue, even this mostly new bridge crew he was saddled with right now.

"Helm," said the first mate. "Chart us a course out of here."

Crash did not blame his crew for this reaction. They knew their jobs but these were people he did not know. He did not know what they would be capable of under pressure and this? This was pressure of the worst kind. The last thing he needed was a freshly medaled deck officer telling him to fall back in front of his crew.

"Belay that order! I want a solid broadside on that thing first. If our cannons can't scratch it, then we'll retreat until we can come back with something that will!"

With a sigh, his human first mate approached his chair. "Sir, a word if I may?"

Crash stood up and turned to tower over the man. Tall as he was, his new mate was only human. That put him a full foot under the minotaur's chin. "You want to file a complaint, wait until we get back. Until then, this ship does what I say. You got that?"

The next sound was his own breath, rushing out in a gasp of raw pain. Looking down, eyes dimming, Crash saw a bright steel short sword sticking out of his gut, the handle firming in his first mate's grasp.

"I'm sorry, sir. This isn't personal." The blade twisted, putting a lie to the man's words. "We've just gotten a better offer."

Last Scene

It hurt to breathe. It hurt to move. And it had hurt to beat every person on the bridge into a bloody pulp, especially that bastard of a now very dead first mate.

There was poison in his veins. Crash knew the feeling, the crawling cold that was already robbing him of feeling in his legs. He would not be standing long. Soon the toxin would reach his heart and he would be unable to move at all. He had barred the door to the bridge. Help could not get to him but neither could any more traitors.

Crash forced himself to stand again, hand pressed against the chest wound that was trying to bleed out. The ship was still hovering, docks in the distance. He could not use steer and use the ship's calling horn at the same time. Even if he could, there was no guarantee there was even a crew at the guns any more. The Glory Road was venting smoke from everywhere and the few raiders still left out there were gleefully cutting her apart by degrees.

"Damn," he grumbled, his shoulders sagging. "Not exactly my finest hour, for sure."

Then the air was split again by the shriek of the beast in the harbor. Looking at it through the globe, he could see that while it was still rampaging unchecked, the harness of chains was beginning to fall away. Each link was burning out, turning to russet dust as they disintegrated. A moment later, a ballista fired from the dock's only remaining defense tower slammed into its chest. The bolt did not pierce deep.

But it pierced. The thing could be hurt. The thing could bleed.

It was everything Crash could do to get one hoof in from of the other and stagger over to the ship's wheel. He could not fire the guns from here, even if he had any left, but he still had one weapon. One way to take that overgrown lizard down.

Affectionately, he patted the wheel even as his vision started to blur again. The last thing he saw before his sight went dark was the creature in the harbor staring up at him in rage and fear.

"You know, old girl... This is always how I figured we'd go out."



XEN'DRIK EXPEDITIONS

Endgame (Round Two): Last Stand **Expedition Adventure #9** **An Adventure for 13th Level Characters** **(Scaled for 11th to 16th Levels of Play)**

Factionmasters: August Hahn, Brian Mackey, Greg Marks, Shawn Merwin
Design: Greg Marks

The Table, a mysterious consortium from across the waves, has come with an armada, a legion of soldiers with only one goal - complete dominion over Stormreach. With the city's defenses still broken by the recent pirate attacks, it falls to the city's four strongest factions to defend their home. But when the horizon is choked by the sails of a fleet so vast it dwarfs the sea itself, can anything survive their deadly first strike?

Based on the original DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® rules created by E. Gary Gygax and Dave Arneson and the new DUNGEONS & DRAGONS game designed by Jonathan Tweet, Monte Cook, Skip Williams, Rich Baker, and Peter Adkison.

Sources: Eberron Campaign Setting (Keith Baker, Bill Slavicsek, James Wyatt), Secrets of Xen'drik (Keith Baker, Jason Bulmahn, Amber Scott), Monster Manual II (Ed Bonny, Jeff Grubb, Rich Redman, Skip Williams, Steve Winter), Maps originally by Robert Lazzaretti

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Adventure Background

It all comes down to this.

A conspiracy has been building for years against the powers that be in Stormreach. Started at the mercantile level as a way of ensuring fair trade and open exploration of Xen'drik, this conspiracy was founded and continues to be led by a group of powerful businessmen and leaders from many of the dragonmarked houses.

This group calls itself the Table, a small conclave of wealthy nobles and warlords interested in keeping Stormreach from becoming an independent state that could lock the emerald continent's only good port away from use by the Five Kingdoms. Their aim is to ensure that no haven exists in Xen'drik for those who would use such a closed harbor as a safe place to foment rebellion against the Five Kingdoms and the fragile peace of the Thronehold Accord.

This noble goal has unfortunately been tainted in recent months by some of its members. Instead of looking to maintain the peace and safeguard the Five Kingdoms, the Table's efforts have increasingly been turned to a much more selfish and vastly simpler task: conquest.

The Table's plan has taken a long time to come together and utilizes "borrowed" resources from the holdings represented by the Table's members. This has resulted in an attack force larger than any Xen'drik has seen in centuries. The power in the Table's army is rivaled only by the acumen of its commanders and the ferocity of its most fearsome asset.

The Table's leader, Guiver'lan d'Tharashk, has been cultivating contacts through his private holdings and interests, gathering cultists of the Dark Six and other fringe individuals with no other allegiances. This loose coalition under his control has yielded a great and terrible reward – control over a legendary beast slumbering in the waters near Stormreach. This massive creature, called the tarrasque in ancient lore, is the hammer Guiver'lan intends to use to crush the defenses of Stormreach.

Behind the lumbering titan, he and his co-conspirators have assembled a private navy with both soarwood sea vessels and airships. More than a dozen displaced mercenary and decommissioned military units have banded together under the Table's various leaders to crew these ships with skill and fervor, each one promised a stake in the sack of Stormreach.

As powerful as the Table's forces are, they are not unbeatable. Guiver'lan and the Table are confident in their victory, but they know of two weak links in their plan. The first is a traitor to their membership, a warlord-knight named Raven with enough knowledge of the Table's methods to turn the tide of battle if he survives long enough to reveal what he knows. The second is the existence of the four factions in Stormreach. Each one is outside the government, outside direct bribery or control.

This makes the members of those factions wildcards in the only game that matters: the battle for subjugation of the emerald continent itself. Dealing with them during the attack would be random and difficult to coordinate because of the chaos of battle. Guiver'lan and his allies have something more direct and personal in mind.

In the last round of this adventure, using information leaked by spies in the factions, the Table has divided each one's members into small groups and drawn them into isolated locations in Stormreach under the false auspices of a "special mission." Cut off from their resources and allies, these limited gatherings are perfectly set up for assassination. In this way, Guiver'lan is being true to his darkest secret; he is not actually of House Sivils but instead of the renegade and outlawed House Tarkanan.

The PCs were one of these small gatherings targeted by the Table, but they were able to escape the attempt on their life with the aid of Scribe, one of Stormrider's children. Meeting with the great blue dragon in his hidden lair, the PCs decided to join forces with a former ally of the Table, a knight known as Raven, and attack the enemy fleet. The party was able to destroy the *Khyber's Shadow*, and disrupt the spells being used to organize and attack the city. While on the ship, the PCs encounter the assassin Veleste, and she switches sides and aided the party against the cultists and shows them how to flee the ship before it sinks. Taking a portal to an underground shrine to the Devourer, the party further disrupted the enemy ritualists and freed a large horde of captives. Fleeing the underground tunnels, the party led the former captives to Radiant Hold and witnessed the Blackwheel Company's flagship, the *Glory Road*, crash into the tarrasque.

This is how the first part of Endgame ends, with the PCs on their way to Radiant Hold, hundreds of refugees in tow, and the city of Stormreach burning and besieged behind them.

Adventure Synopsis

As the second round opens, the factions find themselves huddled together with the refugees from the city in Radiant Hold. The leadership of each faction meets while their followers fortify the walls in preparation for the coming onslaught. It is clear that the city cannot be held and it is unlikely that all of the factions can hold out for long, despite the fortifications of Radiant Hold.

A year ago, the Cabal of Shadows has previously set up refugee camps in Menechtarun Desert for people they rescue from persecution. It's on the southern coast and far bigger than they currently need, and they offer it up as a place to house all of the refugees if only they can find away to get them there. The Blackwheel Company offers to use the *Tidal Wrath* (their elemental kraken class undersea ship) and several smaller vessels to sail them out, but the Table's flagship, the *End of Days*, currently blockading the landing area with a large portion of their fleet.

Part One: The PCs are chosen to sneak out a sally port and trail blaze a path for the refugees to the nearby ruin of Tir-Forel where the Crimson Codex has agents waiting. Once there, they are to use this staging point to assault the *End of Days*. On the way there, the party is assaulted by mercenaries working for the Table.

Part Two: Arriving at the ruins, the party finds that the Crimson Codex agents have been working on a surprise of their own, and with the party, they can now execute their plan. The PCs are given some flying mounts and devices to bombard the enemy fleet. While many of the smaller ships are destroyed, the *End of Days* proves invulnerable to the bombs.

Part Three: Unable to destroy the ship from their current position, the party is directed to blaze a trail to the nearest dock where they rendezvous with some Cabal of Shadows and Blackwheel Company members. Unfortunately they find even more creatures let loose by the Table to terrorize the countryside.

Part Four: The party makes it to the dock and rendezvous with their allies who have plans to deliver the PCs onto the *End of Days* via a stealth MAAD drop where the PCs are ordered to scuttle the ship using an Arclight *disjunction bomb*.

Part Five: The party inserts onto the ship and carries out their daring attack where they fight to the elemental core and confront Captain Jaegor d'Lylander, one of the leaders of the Table, and pirates from the Captain's Alliance Lead by Pluresa the Sea Witch. The party has the chance to set off the bomb and sink the ship so the factions will have a chance to escape.

Conclusion: As the refugees and the majority of the surviving faction members flee, the table overwhelms the Hold, claiming Stormreach for the Dragonmarked Houses. If the PCs are successful, the factions live to influence the prophecy another time.

Troubleshooting

The chief element of this scenario to keep in mind is that *Endgame* is the final chapter in the Xen'drik Expeditions campaign. It starts big and gets bigger right up to the end of the adventure. Maintaining this feel and this pace is a challenge, but to properly wrap up this two-year storyline, nothing less will do. Keep the PCs moving at all times.

A second issue worth noting is the number of combats in this module. Most Xen'drik Expedition modules feature a fair amount of roleplaying opportunity in keeping with the RP-rich setting of Eberron itself. *Endgame* (both rounds) is an exception to this rule. While there are certainly moments where the PCs can roleplay, this scenario is almost entirely geared towards the violent events surrounding the brutal siege of Stormreach and the sundering of the four factions. In a convention setting with limited time, the DM is encouraged to keep things moving and "call" combats in the first three Parts that PCs have obviously won in order to make reach the end of the adventure.

Try to keep this pace and feel going through the adventure. At no time do the PCs have lots of time to stop and catch their breath (such as to cast *hero's feast*). Keep the players on their toes, make sure the pace stays active, and the ensure events of the scenario occur quickly enough that the game feels like just rushed enough to be a credible finale for the campaign.

Adventure Start

As the adventure begins, it is the following morning after the previous round. All PCs have had a chance to rest and refresh their spells. They should have no active spells except those with long durations that they may have cast upon waking. There is not time to consume a *hero's feast*. The PC's EV has not refreshed.

From the parapet of Radiant Hold, you can taste the smoke drifting from Stormreach. The Storm Lords put up a valiant fight, but ever more business men than an army it is likely that they have capitulated by now and even if the Doom of the Deep has been completely driven off, it will not take long before the enemy seeks you out. You stand shoulder to shoulder with all manner of strangers as you can only hope that the factions will be able to work together before the situation worsens.

Give the PCs a chance to introduce themselves if they do not already know each other (the likely do from the previous round). From their vantage on the wall they can see the fires raging across Stormreach in the distance. In the courtyard below them, refugees huddle, cry and wail; fearful of what the future holds. To one

side knights of the Covenant of Light eye a group of Cabal Misfits, while a scholar of Codex observes both passively. Blackwheel soldiers work efficiently to reinforce the walls. The scene is chaotic and the odds are against the PCs and their allies.

Once the PCs have had a chance to meet, proceed with the following read aloud text.

A hush falls over the wails of the refugees that choke the courtyard as the gates to the keep open. A gathering like the world may never have seen before exits through the stout doors as the leaders of all four factions stand united: knights in gleaming armor, fallen angels astride warforged titans, steely-eyed soldiers in black and a great blue dragon. Stormrider's voice carries over the assembled throng, "While we have a brief peace, the forces arrayed against us will seek us out even here and we must find other havens."

General Ogdin interrupts, "And so we are taking volunteers to punch a hole out of this trap. Who will step up?"

The group looks out among the many, searching for heroes.

Give all of the PCs a chance to volunteer. If some of the PCs do not volunteer, Lady Lirashana of the Covenant speaks up, suggesting that the number is not large enough to complete the mission, so Lord Xandrin Corvalis randomly chooses some from the crowd (conveniently the rest of the PCs). Once the PCs are chosen, Lord Corvalis orders the rest of the throng to begin preparations to repel siege.

The Few, The Proud...

The PCs are brought into the keep and asked to sit while the plan is laid out before them.

The Voice of the Storm, a masked man with a thin sword at his side, confidently reviews you while the various notables take their seats. A fine black cloak depicting the moons of Siberys eclipsing the sun trails from his shoulders as he strides to the head of the table. In his wake follows a short, thin man with a slim mustache and a slight goatee who offers you a rakish smile with a friendly effeminate manner while taking notes. "As you can see from the map on the table before you, Streamreach is taken with the Table's forces landed here and here. Their fleet, anchored by their flagship the End of Days, is off shore here blockading any attempts to attack to the shore or sea. The enemy has several airships and other aerial troops making a mass evacuation by air unlikely, even if we had the means. Our units are either bottled here in Radiant hold or separated across the map in small elements that are largely ineffectual against an organized force. That is why we have decided to execute the only plan left to us. We run."

Ohnal Caldyn continues, "To the west of here, between us and the shore, lies the ruin of Tir-Forel, an ancient storehouse of knowledge that has occasionally been used by the Crismon Codex as both a library and safe house. It is subterranean and well hidden and will have a coterie of our Hammers guarding it. You will blaze a trail through the jungle to Tir-Forel, clearing it of enemy pickets. Once you have done so, use this sending stone to contact us and we will begin escorting the refugees to your position."

General Mach Ogden adds, "And once there you will use that forward position to assault the End of Days so the Tidal Wrath, the Blackwheel Company's elemental kraken undersea ship can make port and pick us up, taking us to our safe haven."

The leaders of all of the factions are present, giving the PCs a chance to ask any questions they might desire. All of the faction leaders agree as to what must be done, though a DC 15 Sense Motive suggests the Blackwheel Company and Cabal of Shadows are closer and more comfortable with each other than either the Covenant or Codex. Use the information provided in the Adventure Background and Synopsis and the following to answer any questions the PCs may have:

- **How do we get to Tir-Forel?** *We have prepared a map for you. You will sneak out of a sally port on the western bailey. There is no trail, so you will have to make one of your own. Be sure to mark your path so we can follow. Stealth is important, as you cannot afford to draw the attention of the forces that will soon be besieging us.*
- **Couldn't we just use magic to transport ourselves directly there?** *The curse of the Traveler that affects this continent makes that unwise. Should it take hold of you, who knows where or even when you might end up. You must travel by normal means.*
- **Will you be able to hold without us?** *We have a number of surprises for the Table, some of which should be arriving right now.*
- **What surprises?** *The Cabal has long since been working on a way to watch inside the walls of Radiant Hold, and has formed a psionic portal here from their stronghold, the Hand of Stalwart Reverie. Now that Stormreach has fallen and the last of their followers are soon to join us: a clan of ancient cloud giants skilled in magic and psionics who possess the bodies of warforged titans*

generously supplied by the Blackwheel Company. (This revelation discomforts both the Covenant of Light leadership as well as some but not all of the Blackwheel leaders. Tubal d'Cannith of the Arclight Battalion, as well as the Crimson Codex leaders, seem aware of this unrealized future treachery on behalf the Cabal).

- **How can we trust the other factions?** *We have no choice. We survive together or we die apart.*
- **Where will we go once we manage to reach the Tidal Wrath?** *The Cabal has a refugee camp built in Menechtarun Desert. It's on the coast and far bigger than currently needed to house the people they have there. We will find temporary succor there.*
- **What can you tell us about Tir-Forel?** *It is a small underground ruin. We believe it was once the home of a giant wizard or scholar interested in the prophecy. The Codex has since used it as a secondary vault to collect and store useful pieces of information concerning the prophecy. It has a small handful of operatives in residence at all times.*
- **Can you give us anything to help us?** *Our resources are stretched thin, but the many clerics in residence can heal you of any sickness or wounds that remain to you from your exodus. (If any PC has a lingering condition from the previous round, such as poison, disease or death, they can be cured or raised from the dead at this time.)*
- **When do we leave?** *The sooner the better.*

As the PCs are finishing their questions, a great noise attracts the party's attention.

A thunderous explosion rattles the keep. Rushing outside, it is clear that the Table has found you and is wasting no time beginning its siege. Fire rains from the sky as the refugees flood inside, seeking shelter. Overhead, Scrybe, child of Stormrider, soars to meet the two warforged raptors that are dropping flaming boulders onto your fortifications. Drawing forth a flaming sword, Sublime the fallen angel unfurls his wings and takes flight to join his new draconic ally. The Voice of the Storm screams over the din of battle, "Now, you must go now before they surround us. Find the way for us! Reach Tir-Forel!"

It is easy for the PCs to find and reach the sally port. Once they exit the safety of the walls, proceed with **Part One**.

Part One: The Road to Tir-Forel

Cautiously opening the sally port the paladin peers into the gloom of the nearby jungle. "It appears to be all clear. Go with the Flame." The battle cries and screams of the dying on the other side of the Hold cover the sound of the stone door closing behind you.

The PCs are outside the safety of the walls and running for the cover of the jungle. If the PCs are attempting to use stealth as previously suggested, call for DC 15 Hide checks. Move Silently is unnecessary due to the battle noise. Any PC that fails is targeted with a hail of enemy arrows (five +12 ranged attacks, 1d8+3/x3 each). The DM is encouraged to suggest that enemy forces are descending upon the PCs and their only choice is to flee into the jungle. Make things tense. The PCs are greatly outnumbered by a foe of approximately equal power. Regardless of PCs plan to escape, they are fortunate and they find solace in the jungle and are free to begin their trail blazing duties.

Read the first cut scene now.

Contact with the Enemy (EL 13)

Once in the jungle, the PCs can use the map they were given to choose their path but picking through the jungle is slow going. Even this far into the foliage, the smell of smoke is clear and occasional roars of fantastic beasts or arcane explosions shake the ground. Have the PCs make DC 10 Knowledge (geography) or Survival check to follow the map. If no one succeeds, they lose valuable time in trying to find Tir-Forel. This does not specifically affect the adventure, but should be used to increase the party's sense of urgency.

The PCs are not alone in the jungle. The Table has sent many pickets out to scout for enemy stragglers or patrols. Just over an hour out, the PCs cross paths with one.

Foes: Several greathorn minotaurs are patrolling this area using their *earth glide* ability. Driven out of their homes by competition with the Giants of the mountains, these minotaurs have since become mercenaries and thrown their lot in with the Table. They have a strong hate for giants, half-giants, those displaying giant goods or arms, or speaking their language. Ruthless and angry, the minotaurs wait under the ground and watch with their tremorsense ability for anyone to vent their frustrations upon.

Greathorn Minotaur Myrmidon (2): hp 148; See *Combat Statistics*.

Tactics: The minotaurs take advantage of their earth glide ability to move about the battlefield (a generally flat area with a collection of trees scattered randomly about) without drawing attacks of opportunity. They try to engage a lone target, five-foot stepping out of the earth, activating its earth warp as a swift action, and full attacking. If the party is especially adept at range attacks or flying tactics, the minotaur waits under the ground until someone comes down to them and then it attacks them or uses a *bead of force* if it has one. The Greathorn Minotaur Myrmidons use their *potion of fly* to engage enemies they cannot reach. The minotaurs do not run, knowing that it is important to clear the area of enemies.

COMBAT STATISTICS

GREATHORN MINOTAUR BRUTE CR 9

Greathorn minotaur fighter 2

CE Large monstrous humanoid (earth)

Init -1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., sent, temorsense 120 ft., Listen +8, Spot +8

Languages Giant, Undercommon

AC 21, touch 8, flat-footed 21 (1 size, -1 Dex, +7 natural, +6 armor)

hp 126 (13 HD); **DR** 5/-

Fort +13, **Ref** +6, **Will** +7

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares); earth glide

Melee gore +19 (2d6+10) OR

Melee greathammer +19/+14/+9 (4d6+11/19-20, x4) AND

Melee gore +14 (2d6+3)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

Base Atk +13; **Grp** +24

Atk Options Awesome Blow, Power Attack

Special Actions Earth Warp

Combat Gear *bead of force*

Abilities Str 25, Dex 8, Con 20, Int 9, Wis 10, Cha 10

SQ natural cunning

Feats Awesome Blow, Great Fortitude, Improved Critical (greathammer), Improved Natural Attack (gore), Monkey Grip, Power Attack, Track, Weapon Focus (greathammer)

Skills Intimidate +3, Listen +8, Search +3, Spot +8, Survival +4

Possessions combat gear plus +1 *huge greathammer*, +1 *mitral breastplate*

Earth Glide (Ex) A greathorn minotaur can glide through stone, dirt, or almost any sort of earth except metal as easily as a fish swims through water. Its burrowing leaves behind no tunnel or hole, nor does it create any ripple or other signs of its presence.

Earth Warp (Su) As a swift action, a greathorn minotaur can cause the earth and rock around it to twist and warp in a 60-foot-radius emanation around it., double movement costs through that area. Natural stone, finished stone, and dirt surfaces are subject to this effect. The effect does not move with the minotaur, when the minotaur leaves the area the ground returns to normal. The minotaur ignores movement penalties generated by its own or another greathorn's earth warp ability

Natural Cunning (Ex) Greathorn minotaurs have immunity to *maze* spells, never become lost, and can track enemies. They are never caught flat-footed.

GREATHORN MINOTAUR MYRMIDON CR 11

Greathorn minotaur fighter 4

CE Large monstrous humanoid (earth)

Init -1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., sent, temorsense 120 ft., Listen +8, Spot +8

Languages Giant, Undercommon

AC 21, touch 8, flat-footed 21 (1 size, -1 Dex, +7 natural, +6 armor)

hp 148 (15 HD); **DR** 5/-

Fort +14, **Ref** +7, **Will** +8

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares); earth glide

Melee gore +21 (2d6+10) OR

Melee greathammer +21/+16/+11 (4d6+11/19-20, x4) AND

<p>Melee gore +16 (2d6+3) Space 10 ft.; Reach 10 ft. Base Atk +15; Grp +26 Atk Options Awesome Blow, Power Attack Special Actions Earth Warp Combat Gear <i>bead of force, potion of fly</i></p>
<p>Abilities Str 25, Dex 8, Con 20, Int 9, Wis 10, Cha 10 SQ natural cunning Feats Awesome Blow, Great Fortitude, Improved Critical (greathammer), Improved Natural Attack (gore), Monkey Grip, Power Attack, Power Critical (+4 to confirm threats with greathammer), Track, Weapon Focus (greathammer), Weapon Specialization (greathammer) Skills Intimidate +3, Listen +8, Search +3, Spot +8, Survival +5 Possessions combat gear plus +1 <i>huge greathammer, +1 mitral breastplate, belt of one mighty blow</i> (only one)</p>
<p>Earth Glide (Ex) A greathorn minotaur can glide through stone, dirt, or almost any sort of earth except metal as easily as a fish swims through water. Its burrowing leaves behind no tunnel or hole, nor does it create any ripple or other signs of its presence. Earth Warp (Su) As a swift action, a greathorn minotaur can cause the earth and rock around it to twist and warp in a 60-foot-radius emanation around it., double movement costs through that area. Natural stone, finished stone, and dirt surfaces are subject to this effect. The effect does not move with the minotaur, when the minotaur leaves the area the ground returns to normal. The minotaur ignores movement penalties generated by its own or another greathorn's earth warp ability Natural Cunning (Ex) Greathorn minotaurs have immunity to <i>maze</i> spells, never become lost, and can track enemies. They are never caught flat-footed.</p>

Scaling the Encounter

- 11th Characters:** Replace the Greathorn Minotaur Myrmidons with two Greathorn Minotaur Brutes.
- 12th Characters:** Replace the Greathorn Minotaur Myrmidons with three Greathorn Minotaur Brutes.
- 14th Characters:** Add an additional Greathorn Minotaur Myrmidon.
- 15th Characters:** Add two additional Greathorn Minotaur Myrmidons.
- 16th Characters:** Add two additional Greathorn Minotaur Myrmidons and their pet purple worm (*MM* 211).

After the party has put down the minotaurs, they are free to continue on their way and onto **Part Two**.

Part Two: Death From Above

The party travels for another hour before reaching the ruins of Tir-Forel. During that time they are aware of aerial patrols, but thus far they have not been spotted.

True to the map, you have found your destination. A handful of tumbledown worked stone buried among the greenery are all the mark the ruin. A few minutes of searching finds a cleverly concealed door. As you go to open it, the door opens from the inside and you can see a smiling man wearing spectacles and a leather apron. "Call me Orav. You're just in time. Come on in."

Orav (male human artificer; bumbling) bids the PCs come inside where he introduces them to Direek (male half-orc fighter; quiet) and Lurane (female half-elf sorcerer; fiery). Inside there are three rooms. The central room contains a library with rooms to the sides, one a workshop and the other a stable with the hidden external door housing the mounts mentioned below.

The three had been cut off from communication for nearly a day, but have been doing their best to keep up on their allies and what's been happening by Lurane's *scrying*, but since she has run out of spells, the group has been working on their own plan and the PCs are just in time aid them.

The Plan

Direek keeps several beasts to serve as fresh mounts for Crimson Codex agents passing through the area. Orav has been working on devices found in the workshop vault to create drop explosive charges and was hoping to rig the devices to each of the mounts and then fly over the enemy fleet and bomb them, hoping sinking the enemy fleet. The PCs are just in time to undertake the attack run. None of the Crimson Codex

agents are enthusiastic about going up. Neither Orav nor Lurane are trained at handling a mount and Direek is severely wounded from a previous encounter with a strange vine-like creature in the jungle that he fled from.

If the PCs agree to undertake the mission, Orav explains that once they are above the fleet, they will have to trigger the devices (which look much like a covered wheelbarrow) manually. After that, the device will drop an explosive charge each round, so the PCs will have to hold their formation for five continuous rounds. That means that they cannot perform aerial maneuvers, so the PCs will have to protect their mounts through their own methods. They cannot turn off the device once activated, since all of the bombs are active once it is activated and they will explode on the mount if the device is tipped back into the resting position (Reflex DC 15 half each; 20d6 points of damage per charge remaining; half fire and half acid). The mounts have previously been trained to fly together and should be able to maintain formation without significant effort by the PCs but may wander should there be a combat and a PC is not there to guide them (DC 5 Ride check).

Each mount comes with a military saddle but each PC must un-strap themselves from the military saddle in order to move back to where the wheelbarrow is on the mount's back unless the PCs use magic or think to rig up something before taking flight. Moving on the back of the mount requires a DC 10 Balance check. The PC receives a +4 synergy bonus to this check if they have 5 or more ranks in Ride. The PCs are 1000 feet about the water (20d6 falling damage) unless they can arrest their fall (DC 10 Reflex).

The type of mount given to each PC depends on the faction which they belong:

- **Blackwheel Company:** griffon (MM 139)
- **Cabal of Shadows:** dire bat (MM 62)
- **Covenant of Light:** pegasus (MM 207)
- **Crimson Codex:** hipogriff (MM 152)

Read the second cut scene now.

Contacting Stormrider/Radiant Hold

If the PCs activate the *sending stone* they were given, they may speak a message up to 25 words to Stormrider and have him respond back with up to 25 words. How he responds depends on what questions, if any, the PCs ask. He is happy that they cleared the path to Tir-Forel and will begin sending groups of refugees immediately. He wants the PCs to aid in the fight however possible, and see about gaining a beachhead on the shore and eliminate the enemy fleet anyway they can; especially focusing on the *End of Days*. Afterwards, the PCs are expected to return to Tir-Forel from their bombing mission and report on whether it is safe to advance to the beach. Stormrider will send someone who can speak for the faction leaders as soon as possible to guide the PCs in their next move after the bombing run.

Bombing Run (EL 15)

Strapping yourself to your mount, you take flight, rocketing out of the hidden door and rapidly climbing into the sky. To the north below you the Table's fleet is neatly lined up to blockade Stormreach and the surrounding shore. As you get set up for your attack run, your mounts form up in a line perpendicular to your target and chaos reigns below as someone below spots you seconds too late. The small cutter below bursts into flames!

Foes: At the end of the first round in which the PCs begin their strafing run, the party is attacked by perytons that are teleported near the party by wizards from the ships below. Note that due to maneuverability classes the mounts must keep moving every round, but perytons do not due to their Hover feat. The perytons take attacks of opportunity on the PCs when their mounts move. The mounts do not fight, being too busy double moving and focusing on maintaining formation, moving sixty squares per round.

Advanced Peryton (4): hp 155; See *Combat Statistics*.

Peryton Priest: hp 249; See *CR 12 Combat Statistics*.

Peryton Ravager: hp 235; See *Combat Statistics*.

Tactics: The location of the PCs is well known by the perytons, since the falling bombs given away their position. Since the perytons are the alert defenders for the *End of Days*, used to repel borders or aerial attacks, the perytons have precast the spells in their power-up suites before arriving.

While attacking, the perytons descend from the air and attempt to make good use of their Fly-by and Hover feats to limit the number of attackers that can attack them. They will not use their heart rip ability upon the PCs, needing to stop the bombers instead.

The peryton priest supports as appropriate with spells but is a significant melee combatant and spends most time engaged in melee if not otherwise needed. She uses her smite on the first likely target. If any likely cleric PC seems to have DR or there are summoned creatures with DR, the peryton priest uses her Glorious Weapons feat.

The perytons DO NOT give chase when the PCs have finished their bombing run if the PCs flee, but continue to engage as long as the PCs stay. After this encounter, the perytons are called to Stormreach (if alive) and are not present when the PCs later attack the *End of Days*.

Development: If a PC falls to the water below and survives or has their body recovered, the PCs can easily flee to shore. The damage and chaos created by the PCs leave the fleet unable to quickly respond.

COMBAT STATISTICS

Advanced Peryton CR 8

CE Large magical beast

Init +2; Senses Listen +10, Spot +19; scent

Languages Common (understood, not spoken)

AC 19, touch 14, flat-footed 17; (+2 Dex, +5 natural, -1 size, +3 deflection); *shield of faith* +3

hp 144 (155 with *hero's feast*) (14 HD); **DR** 5/magic

Fort +12, **Ref** +11, **Will** +6

Speed 20 ft. (4 squares); fly 60 ft. (poor)

Melee 2 claws +22 (1d6+9) AND

Melee 2 slams +20 (1d4+5) AND

Melee bite +20 (1d8+5)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

Base Atk +14; **Grp** +26

Atk Options heart-rip

Abilities Str 26, Dex 14, Con 16, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 10

SQ Scent

Feats Flyby Attack, Hover, Improved Toughness, Multiattack, Power Attack

Skills Intimidate +2, Listen +10, Move Silently +10, Spot +19, Survival +11

Possessions *Amulet of mighty fists* +1.

Heart-Rip (Ex): Perytons usually save their claw and bite attacks for last because of their overwhelming desire to consume their victims' hearts. Perytons always take the opportunity to deliver a coup de grace on a helpless opponent—one who is bound, held, sleeping, paralyzed, or unconscious. As a full-round action, the peryton delivers an automatic critical hit. If the defender survives the damage, he must still make a Fortitude save (DC 10 + damage dealt) or die. If the coup de grace kills the defender, the peryton has eaten his heart. A character who has had his heart ripped out in this fashion can still be returned to life with a *resurrection* spell, but not with *raise dead*.

Peryton Priest CR 12

Female peryton cleric 8

NE Large magical beast

Init +2; Senses Listen +11, Spot +20; scent

Languages Common (understood, not spoken)

AC 17, touch 12, flat-footed 15; (+2 Dex, +5 natural, -1 size, +1 deflection); AC 18 versus good opponents

hp 238 (249 with *hero's feast*) (22 HD); **DR** 5/magic

Immune *death ward*, grapple (*freedom of movement*)

Resist fire 20 (*resist energy*)

Fort +19, **Ref** +14, **Will** +13; +2 vs. Good opponents

Speed 20 ft. (4 squares); fly 60 ft. (poor)

Melee 2 claws +30 (1d6+11) AND

Melee 2 slams +28 (1d4+6) AND

Melee bite +28 (1d8+6)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

Base Atk +20; **Grp** +34

Atk Options heart-rip, smite (1/day, +4 to attack, +8 damage), strike as magic (*greater magic fang*)

Special Actions rebuke undead 3/day

Cleric Spells Prepared (CL 8th):

4th—[†]*death ward*, [†]*freedom of movement*, *inflict critical wounds*^D (DC 20)
 3rd—*cure serious wounds*, *dispel magic*, [†]*greater magic fang*^D, *invisibility purge*, *prayer*
 2nd—[†]*bull strength*, *hold person* (2) (DC 18), *remove paralysis*, [†]*resist energy*^D
 1st—*bless*, *divine favor*, *magic fang*^D, [†]*protection from good*, *shield of faith* (2)
 0th—*cure minor wounds* (2), *detect magic* (2), *guidance*, *resistance*
 D: Domain spell. Domains: Destruction, Dragon.
[†]Already cast

Abilities Str 26, Dex 14, Con 16 [18], Int 10, Wis 16, Cha 10

SQ scent

Feats Flyby Attack, Glorious Weapons, Hover, Improved Toughness, Multiattack, Power Attack, Reach Spell

Skills Concentration +20, Intimidate +2, Listen +11, Move Silently +10, Spot +20, Survival +12

Possessions *Amulet of health* +2, *ring of protection* +1, *pearl of power II* (used), *pearl of power IV* (used)

Heart-Rip (Ex): Perytons usually save their claw and bite attacks for last because of their overwhelming desire to consume their victims' hearts. Perytons always take the opportunity to deliver a coup de grace on a helpless opponent—one who is bound, held, sleeping, paralyzed, or unconscious. As a full-round action, the peryton delivers an automatic critical hit. If the defender survives the damage, he must still make a Fortitude save (DC 10 + damage dealt) or die. If the coup de grace kills the defender, the peryton has eaten his heart. A character who has had his heart ripped out in this fashion can still be returned to life with a *resurrection* spell, but not with *raise dead*.

PERYTON PRIEST**CR 14**

Female peryton cleric 12

NE Large magical beast

Init +2; Senses Listen +11, Spot +20; scent

Languages Common (understood, not spoken)

AC 26, touch 15, flat-footed 24; (+6 armor, +2 Dex, +5 natural, -1 size, +4 deflection); 20% concealment vs. ranged attacks (*entropic shield*)

hp 268 (281 with *hero's feast*) (26 HD); **DR** 5/magic

Immune *death ward*, grapple (*freedom of movement*)

Resist fire 30 (*resist energy*); **SR** 28

Fort +22, **Ref** +17, **Will** +17; +2 vs. Good opponents

Speed 20 ft. (4 squares); fly 60 ft. (poor)

Melee 2 claws +33 (1d6+10) AND

Melee 2 slams +31 (1d4+5) AND

Melee bite +32 (1d8+6)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

Base Atk +23; **Grp** +37

Atk Options heart-rip, smite (1/day, +4 to attack, +12 damage), bite strikes as magic (*magic fang*)

Special Actions rebuke undead 3/day

Cleric Spells Prepared (CL 12th):

6th—*heal*, *hero's feast*, *stoneskin*^D
 5th—*flamestrike* (DC 21), *mass cure light wounds*, [†]*spell resistance*, [†]*true seeing*^D
 4th—[†]*death ward*, [†]*freedom of movement* (2), *inflict critical wounds*^D (DC 20)
 3rd—*cure serious wounds*, *dispel magic*, [†]*greater magic fang*^D, *invisibility purge*, [†]*magic vestment*, *prayer*
 2nd—[†]*bull strength*, *hold person* (2) (DC 18), *remove paralysis*, [†]*resist energy*^D (2)
 1st—*bless*, *divine favor*, [†]*entropic shield*, [†]*magic fang*^D, [†]*protection from good*, *shield of faith* (2)
 0th—*cure minor wounds* (2), *detect magic* (2), *guidance*, *resistance*
 D: Domain spell. Domains: Destruction, Dragon.
[†]Already cast

Abilities Str 26, Dex 14, Con 16 [18], Int 10, Wis 17, Cha 10

SQ scent

Feats Flyby Attack, Glorious Weapons, Hover, Improved Toughness, Multiattack, Power Attack, Practiced Spellcaster, Reach Spell

Skills Concentration +24, Intimidate +2, Listen +11, Move Silently +10, Spot +20, Survival +12
Possessions *Amulet of health* +2, *bracers of armor* +2, *cloak of resistance* +1, *ring of protection* +1, cloth tabard

Heart-Rip (Ex): Perytons usually save their claw and bite attacks for last because of their overwhelming desire to consume their victims' hearts. Perytons always take the opportunity to deliver a coup de grace on a helpless opponent—one who is bound, held, sleeping, paralyzed, or unconscious. As a full-round action, the peryton delivers an automatic critical hit. If the defender survives the damage, he must still make a Fortitude save (DC 10 + damage dealt) or die. If the coup de grace kills the defender, the peryton has eaten his heart. A character who has had his heart ripped out in this fashion can still be returned to life with a *resurrection* spell, but not with *raise dead*.

PERYTON RAVAGER [RAGING] CR 12

Male peryton barbarian 2/fighter 2

CE Large magical beast

Init +2; Senses Listen +18, Spot +19; scent

Languages Common (understood, not spoken)

AC 18, touch 13, flat-footed 16; (+2 Dex, +5 natural, -1 size, +4 deflection, -2 rage); uncanny dodge
hp 222 (235 with *hero's feast*) (18 HD); **DR** 5/magic and 10/adamantine (150 pts. *stoneskin*)

Immune grapple (*freedom of movement*)

Resist fire 20 (*resist energy*)

Fort +20, **Ref** +11, **Will** +9

Speed 20 ft. (4 squares); fly 60 ft. (poor)

Melee 2 claws +32 (1d8+13/19-20) AND

Melee 2 slams +29 (1d4+7) AND

Melee bite +29 (1d8+7)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

Base Atk +18; **Grp** +34

Atk Options heart-rip, rage 1/day, strikes as magic (*greater magic fang*)

Abilities Str 31, [35] Dex 14, Con 20, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 10

SQ Scent

Feats Flyby Attack, Hover, Improved Critical (Claw), Improved Natural Attack (Claw), Improved Toughness, Multiattack, Power Attack, Power Critical (Claw), Weapon Focus (Claw)

Skills Intimidate +6, Listen +18, Move Silently +10, Spot +19, Survival +11

Possessions *Belt of strength* +4.

Heart-Rip (Ex): Perytons usually save their claw and bite attacks for last because of their overwhelming desire to consume their victims' hearts. Perytons always take the opportunity to deliver a coup de grace on a helpless opponent—one who is bound, held, sleeping, paralyzed, or unconscious. As a full-round action, the peryton delivers an automatic critical hit. If the defender survives the damage, he must still make a Fortitude save (DC 10 + damage dealt) or die. If the coup de grace kills the defender, the peryton has eaten his heart. A character who has had his heart ripped out in this fashion can still be returned to life with a *resurrection* spell, but not with *raise dead*.

When the peryton ravager is not raging, the following changes apply to the above statistics.

AC 20, touch 15, flat-footed 18

hp 186 (199 with *hero's feast*)

Fort +18, **Will** +7

Melee 2 claws +30 (1d8+11/19-20) AND

Melee 2 slams +27 (1d4+6) AND

Melee bite +27 (1d8+6)

Grp +32

Abilities Str 27, [31] Dex 14, Con 16

Glorious Weapons [Divine]

Reference: Complete Divine, p. 82.

You can channel positive or negative energy to imbue your allies' weapons with an alignment.

Prerequisites: Ability to turn or rebuke undead.

Benefits: You can spend a turn or rebuke attempt as a standard action to align the melee weapons (including natural weapons) of all allies within a 60-ft. burst as good (if you channel positive energy) or evil (if you channel negative energy). Such weapons can overcome damage reduction as if they had the appropriate alignment. The effect lasts until the end of your next turn.

Scaling the Encounter

11th Characters: Remove two of the Advanced Perytons and the peryton ravager.

12th Characters: Remove two of the Advanced Perytons.

14th Characters: Replace the CR 12 peryton priest with the CR 14 version.

16th & 15th Characters: Replace the CR 12 peryton priest with the CR 14 version and add a second peryton ravager.

As the last of the charges fall, you have a chance to observe your work. Many of the smaller ships are aflame, and at least three are sinking. The End of Days however, seems completely immune. Not only is the ship not burning, but none of the sailors on its deck seem the least bit injured. The ship is clearly turning to address your attack and already, a barrage of ballista bolts comes dangerously close to your position. It appears you will have to find some other way to stop the End of Days and open the way to freedom.

The PCs have little choice but to land their mounts and regroup. It is clear the *End of Days* and the remaining ships are preparing to address the PCs. If the PCs would rather directly attack, remind them of the necessity of their report. They will need to return to Tir-Forel and inform their superiors that the beach is not safe.

Part Three: Ever Forward

Returning to Tir-Forel, refugees and faction members have already begun to crowd the underground ruin. It won't take long for the ancient library to overflow with those seeking solace. "Ah... uh... excuse me there uh... young fellows... Might I trouble you for a moment?"

A bespectacled, silver haired, wizened old man peers out from the doorway and beckons you inside. His uniform is wrinkled and worn, but the insignia on his breast—a wheel with seven spokes—shows that he is of substantial rank in the Company. Pockets cover the non-standard uniform and are crammed with various objects. Wands, rods, and any number of other trinkets hang from the old man's belt. He appears to be of old age, but his eyes hint that he may be younger at heart than he looks on the exterior.

"Tubal d'Cannith," he introduces himself, pushing his spectacles up on his nose, "Chief Artificer of the Blackwheel Company, won't you please join me for a moment while I explain the next step? I need you to clear a path to the shoreline that we can continue our fighting retreat and move these refugees ahead of the conflict. Once there, you must destroy the End of Days. I have prepared an insertion for you once you arrive and my Arclight boys have cooked up a nasty surprise for our enemies. This trinket will disjoin the End of Days from all enchantments protecting it, as well as destroying its enslaved elemental. Just don't stand too close when it goes it off."

The PCs need to cover the ground between the ruin and the shore, eliminating any threats between here and there. Once at the shore, they will be able to rendezvous with some Cabal of Shadows and Blackwheel Company members waiting to insert the PCs on the *End of Days*. If the PCs have more questions, Tubal does his best to answer them.

- **Who will we meet and how will they get us aboard?** *"Ah, well, you see, we had a team in this area that has been cut off. They are more scouts than soldiers and on sort of a joint mission anyway not really ready for combat. But they can help perform a variation on the typical MAAD to insert you into the combat zone."*
- **What kind of joint mission?** *"I can't see as it matters now that we are all friends, but some of us have been a little more forward thinking and trying to work together for some time."*
- **Who have you been working with?** *"Some of the Cabal folks have been interested in what Arclight could do for them."*
- **What do you mean a "variation on the typical MAAD?"** *"Well, we don't have an airship, so it's not exactly a MAAD, but we have some stealth mounts that can fly silently and unseen and we will use them to drop you on to the End of Days. Other than that, it should be basically the same."*

- **What kind of mounts?** *"Giant owls that have been modified for our purposes."*
- **How do we use this device?** *"I expect that given the size of the ship, the enchantments protecting it will be focus on the ships elemental core. You need to plant the device next to the core and push the large red button. You have six seconds to flee before it explodes, destroying all magic within forty feet of it. A secondary alchemical charge will then violently detonate, hopefully blowing a hole through the hull."*
- **Do you have anything else to help us?** *"Yes, I have a potion for each of you."* (This special elixir is both a *potion of cure serious wounds* and *swift invisibility*.)
- **What if we instead take the ship by force?** *"I don't think that's possible, it has hundreds of the Table's best men. Since time is of the essence, it is better if you scuttle the ship."*
- **How do we get off the sinking ship?** *"Hmm... I hadn't really thought of that. I'm sure you will come up with something."*
- **What's the elemental core?** *"Many people think that the elemental that powers an elemental galleon is bound directly to the helm, but the helm is in fact only a tool to communicate with the elemental. The core is a large metal cylinder, slightly bigger than a man with a Khyber dragonshard embedded in it to hold the elemental within. The core not only contains the elemental, but it is the focus for all the enchantments that protect and power a ship."*
- **How do we find the elemental core?** *"It will be somewhere in the bottom of the ship. I don't recognize this particular design, but the core is always at the very bottom of a ship, probably towards the rear or center."*

If the PCs question whether they should be following Tubal's orders and instead magically contact one of their own superiors, whomever they contact orders the PCs to comply as previously ordered and attack the *End of Days*.

To the Docks (EL 12)

It takes the PCs twenty minutes to reach the docks traveling through the jungle, but half way there they encounter another surprise.

Foes: The Table has released a horrible plant creature into the shadowy jungle with instructions to kill all enemy humanoids it encounters. It has already tangled with Direek, but since he got away, the vinespawn is still hungry and prowls the area near Tir-Forel hoping to relocate its prey.

Dark Vinespawn Elder: hp 336; *See Combat Statistics.*

Tactics: The vinespawn is hungry, but generally intelligent enough to avoid attacking the Table's soldiers if they are displaying the heraldry of a Dragonmarked House. It does become confused sometimes, and accidents do happen. If any of the PCs bear a dragonmark or wear House livery, the creature does not attack them unless attacked first. This does not save other PCs from being targeted however.

The vinespawn moves to engulf as many opponents as possible, though it is smart enough to tell the difference between mounts and PCs and so targets the humanoids that are more likely to be dangerous. Once it has some foes engulfed, it crushes them as a free action and then focuses the rest of its attacks on other enemies. The creature hides in plain sight, even after making an attack (-20 Hide for hiding after an attack) but is willing to run away if reduced below three-quarters of its hit points or all of the PCs can fly and thus cannot be attacked.

COMBAT STATISTICS

DARK VINESPAWN ELITE

CR 10

N Large plant (extraplanar)

Init +6; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., superior low-light vision; **Listen** +3, **Spot** +4

AC 19, touch 15, flat-footed 13; **Dodge**, **Mobility** (-1 size, +6 Dex, +4 natural)

hp 186 (20 HD); **DR** 5/slashing

Immune plant immunities

Resist cold 10

Fort +16, **Ref** +14, **Will** +6

Weakness vulnerability to fire

Speed 40 ft. (8 squares), climb 40 ft.

Melee 2 slams +21 (1d8+6)

Ranged vine net +20 touch (entangle)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

Base Atk +15; **Grp** +25

Atk Options Power Attack

Special Actions engulf, hide in plain sight, spawning

Abilities Str 22, Dex 22, Con 18, Int 5, Wis 10, Cha 12

SQ plant traits

Feats Ability Focus (engulf), Dodge, Improved Natural Attack (slam), Lightning Reflexes, Mobility, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (slam)

Skills Climb +14, Hide +31 (+39 in forest), Listen +3, Move Silently +15, Spot +4

Vine Net (Ex) A vinespawncan hurl parts of its body up to 30 feet as a ranged attack. Each of these tightly wound balls opens in flight to form a net that can entangle a creature up to one size category larger than the vinespawncan. A vinespawncan create one vine net per day for every 4 Hit Dice that it has.

Engulf (Ex) As a standard action, a vinespawncan flow over Medium or smaller creatures, entrapping the, within its form. The vinespawncan simply moves into the opponent's space; any creature whose space it completely covers is subject to the engulf attack. A vinespawncan cannot make slam or vine net attacks during a round in which it engulfs. It can engulf as many creatures as fits in its space.

Opponents can make attacks of opportunity against a vinespawncan, but if they do, they are not entitled to a saving throw. Those who do not attempt attacks of opportunity must succeed on a DC 20 Reflex saving or be engulfed; on a success, a creature moves aside or back (opponent's choice) to move out of the vinespawncan's path. The save is Strength-based.

As a swift action, a vinespawncan crush engulfed creatures, dealing 2d6+12 points of nonlethal damage. Engulfed creatures are considered grappled and trapped within the vinespawncan's body, but they can attempt to damage the vinespawncan or escape from it as with a normal grapple. A vinespawncan is not considered to be grappling when it has engulfed a creature, and it cannot be pinned by an engulfed creature.

A creature engulfed by a vinespawncan is subject to any area effect to which the vinespawncan is subjected. Grappled and engulfed creatures lose any Dexterity bonus to AC but gain a +4 bonus on Reflex saves for having cover. An engulfed creature takes half damage from any attack that does piercing damage to the vinespawncan. This half damage is calculated before the vinespawncan's damage reduction is applied to the attack.

A vinespawncan can choose to expel engulfed creatures as a standard action. If a vinespawncan is killed, any engulfed creatures are freed.

Spawning (Ex) As a standard action, a vinespawncan can attempt to insert its spawning root down the throat of an engulfed humanoid, monstrous humanoid, or giant. An unconscious engulfed creature cannot resist the spawning root. A vinespawncan must succeed on a grapple check to insert any other creature. The engulfed creature takes 1d6+8 points of damage as the thorny appendage burrows into its stomach. The presence of the spawning root prevents talking, the casting of spells with verbal components, or any other activities requiring speech. Removing a spawning root requires a successful grapple check by the creature invaded by the root, but doing so deals an extra 1d6 points of damage. If the vinespawncan is killed, the spawning root can be removed without dealing damage.

A spawning root nourishes an unconscious creature, keeping it breathing while the vinespawncan uses periodic swift actions to deal nonlethal damage and keep the target unconscious. If the target creature is left in this state for 1 day, vines grow through its veins. On the fourth day in this state, the victim dies as an adult vinespawncan exits the body of the parent.

A vinespawncan that is attacked during the spawning process can fight back but cannot move without disengaging its spawning root. Only if reduced to 20 or fewer hit points does it break off, disengaging the vine, dealing damage as above, and fleeing with the engulfed creatures in tow.

If extracted before the fourth day, the victim is sickened even when returned to consciousness. Such victims die in 2d4 days unless *remove disease* is used to destroy the vines that can be seen growing beneath the skin.

Hide in Plain Sight (Ex) Can use the Hide skill, even while being observed (except in natural daylight, the effect of a *daylight* spell, or similar effect).

DARK VINESPAWN ELDER

CR 12

N Huge plant (extraplanar)

Init +9; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., superior low-light vision; Listen +3, Spot +4

AC 20, touch 13, flat-footed 15; Dodge, Mobility (-2 size, +5 Dex, +7 natural)

hp 336 (28 HD); **DR** 5/slashing

Immune plant immunities

Resist cold 10

Fort +21, **Ref** +15, **Will** +8

Weakness vulnerability to fire

Speed 40 ft. (8 squares), climb 40 ft.

Melee 2 slams +31 (2d6+11)

Ranged vine net +28 touch (entangle)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

Base Atk +15; **Grp** +33

Atk Options Power Attack

Special Actions engulf, hide in plain sight, spawning

Abilities Str 32, Dex 20, Con 22, Int 5, Wis 10, Cha 12

SQ plant traits

Feats Ability Focus (engulf), Dodge, Improved Initiative, Improved Natural Attack (slam), Improved Toughness, Lightning Reflexes, Mobility, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (slam)

Skills Climb +19, Hide +38 (+46 in forest), Listen +3, Move Silently +14, Spot +4

Vine Net (Ex) A vinespawncan hurl parts of its body up to 30 feet as a ranged attack. Each of these tightly wound balls opens in flight to form a net that can entangle a creature up to one size category larger than the vinespawncan. A vinespawncan create one vine net per day for every 4 Hit Dice that it has.

Engulf (Ex) As a standard action, a vinespawncan flow over Medium or smaller creatures, entrapping the, within its form. The vinespawncan simply moves into the opponent's space; any creature whose space it completely covers is subject to the engulf attack. A vinespawncan cannot make slam or vine net attacks during a round in which it engulfs. It can engulf as many creatures as fits in its space.

Opponents can make attacks of opportunity against a vinespawncan, but if they do, they are not entitled to a saving throw. Those who do not attempt attacks of opportunity must succeed on a DC 25 Reflex saving or be engulfed; on a success, a creature moves aside or back (opponent's choice) to move out of the vinespawncan's path. The save is Strength-based.

As a swift action, a vinespawncan crush engulfed creatures, dealing 3d6+16 points of nonlethal damage. Engulfed creatures are considered grappled and trapped within the vinespawncan's body, but they can attempt to damage the vinespawncan or escape from it as with a normal grapple. A vinespawncan is not considered to be grappling when it has engulf a creature, and it cannot be pinned by an engulfed creature.

A creature engulfed by a vinespawncan is subject to any area effect to which the vinespawncan is subjected. Grappled and engulfed creatures lose any Dexterity bonus to AC but gain a +4 bonus on Reflex saves for having cover. An engulfed creature takes half damage from any attack that does piercing damage to the vinespawncan. This half damage is calculated before the vinespawncan's damage reduction is applied to the attack.

A vinespawncan can choose to expel engulfed creatures as a standard action. If a vinespawncan is killed, any engulfed creatures are freed.

Spawning (Ex) As a standard action, a vinespawncan can attempt to insert its spawning root down the throat of an engulfed humanoid, monstrous humanoid, or giant. An unconscious engulf creature cannot resist the spawning root. A vinespawncan must succeed on a grapple check to indirect any other creature. The engulfed creature takes 1d8+13 points of damage as the thorny appendage burrows into its stomach. The presence of the spawning root prevents talking, the casting of spells with verbal components, or any other activities requiring speech. Removing a spawning root requires a successful grapple check by the creature invaded by the root, but doing so deals an extra 1d8 points of damage. If the vinespawncan is killed, the spawning root can be removed without dealing damage.

A spawning root nourishes an unconscious creature, keeping it breathing while the vinespawncan uses periodic swift actions to deal nonlethal damage and keep the target unconscious. If the target creature is left in this state for 1 day, vines grow through its veins. On the fourth day in this state, the victim dies as an adult vinespawncan exits the body of the parent.

A vinespawncan that is attacked during the spawning process can fight back but cannot move without disengaging its spawning root. Only if reduced to 20 or fewer hit points does it break off, disengaging the vine, dealing damage as above, and fleeing with the engulfed creatures in tow.

If extracted before the fourth day, the victim is sickened even when returned to consciousness. Such victims die in 2d4 days unless *remove disease* is used to destroy the vines that can be seen growing beneath the skin.

Hide in Plain Sight (Ex) Can use the Hide skill, even while being observed (except in natural daylight, the effect of a *daylight* spell, or similar effect).

GREATER DARK VINESPAWN CR 14

N Huge plant (extraplanar)

Init +9; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., superior low-light vision; **Listen** +3, **Spot** +4

AC 20, touch 13, flat-footed 15; **Dodge**, **Mobility** (-2 size, +5 Dex, +7 natural)

hp 432 (36 HD); **DR** 5/slashing

Immune plant immunities

Resist cold 10

Fort +25, **Ref** +18, **Will** +11

Weakness vulnerability to fire

Speed 40 ft. (8 squares), climb 40 ft.

Melee 2 slams +38 (2d6+12)

Ranged vine net +34 touch (entangle)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

Base Atk +19; **Grp** +41

Atk Options Power Attack

Special Actions engulf, hide in plain sight, spawning

Abilities Str 34, Dex 20, Con 22, Int 5, Wis 10, Cha 12

SQ plant traits

Feats Ability Focus (engulf), Danger Sense (roll twice for Initiative, take the better), Dodge, Improved Initiative, Improved Natural Attack (slam), Improved Toughness, Lightning Reflexes, Mobility, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (grapple), Weapon Focus (slam)

Skills Climb +19, Hide +45 (+54 in forest), Listen +3, Move Silently +14, Spot +4

Vine Net (Ex) A vinespawncan hurl parts of its body up to 30 feet as a ranged attack. Each of these tightly wound balls opens in flight to form a net that can entangle a creature up to one size category larger than the vinespawncan. A vinespawncan create one vine net per day for every 4 Hit Dice that it has.

Engulf (Ex) As a standard action, a vinespawncan flow over Medium or smaller creatures, entrapping the, within its form. The vinespawncan simply moves into the opponent's space; any creature whose space it completely covers is subject to the engulf attack. A vinespawncan cannot make slam or vine net attacks during a round in which it engulfs. It can engulf as many creatures as fits in its space.

Opponents can make attacks of opportunity against a vinespawncan, but if they do, they are not entitled to a saving throw. Those who do not attempt attacks of opportunity must succeed on a DC 26 Reflex saving or be engulfed; on a success, a creature moves aside or back (opponent's choice) to move out of the vinespawncan's path. The save is Strength-based.

As a swift action, a vinespawncan crush engulfed creatures, dealing 3d6+18 points of nonlethal damage. Engulfed creatures are considered grappled and trapped within the vinespawncan's body, but they can attempt to damage the vinespawncan or escape from it as with a normal grapple. A vinespawncan is not considered to be grappling when it has engulf a creature, and it cannot be pinned by an engulfed creature.

A creature engulfed by a vinespawncan is subject to any area effect to which the vinespawncan is subjected. Grappled and engulfed creatures lose any Dexterity bonus to AC but gain a +4 bonus on Reflex saves for having cover. An engulfed creature takes half damage from any attack that does piercing damage to the vinespawncan. This half damage is calculated before the vinespawncan's damage reduction is applied to the attack.

A vinespawncan can choose to expel engulfed creatures as a standard action. If a vinespawncan is killed, any engulfed creatures are freed.

Spawning (Ex) As a standard action, a vinespawncan can attempt to insert its spawning root down the throat of an engulfed humanoid, monstrous humanoid, or giant. An unconscious engulf creature cannot resist the spawning root. A vinespawncan must succeed on a grapple check to indirect any other creature. The engulfed creature takes 1d8+14 points of damage as the thorny appendage burrows into its stomach. The presence of the spawning root prevents talking, the casting of spells with verbal components, or any other activities requiring speech. Removing a spawning root requires a successful grapple check by the creature invaded by the root, but doing so deals an extra 1d8 points of damage. If the vinespawncan is killed, the spawning root can be removed without dealing damage.

A spawning root nourishes an unconscious creature, keeping it breathing while the vinespawncan uses periodic swift actions to deal nonlethal damage and keep the target unconscious. If the target creature is left in this state for 1 day, vines grow through its veins. On the fourth day in this state, the victim dies as an adult vinespawncan exits the body of the parent.

A vinespawncan that is attacked during the spawning process can fight back but cannot move without disengaging its spawning root. Only if reduced to 20 or fewer hit points does it break off, disengaging the vine, dealing damage as above, and fleeing with the engulfed creatures in tow.

If extracted before the fourth day, the victim is sickened even when returned to consciousness. Such victims die in 2d4 days unless *remove disease* is used to destroy the vines that can be seen growing beneath the skin.

Hide in Plain Sight (Ex) Can use the Hide skill, even while being observed (except in natural daylight, the effect of a *daylight* spell, or similar effect).

Scaling the Encounter

11th & 12th Characters: Replace the Dark Vinespawn Elder with a Dark Vinespawn Elite.

14th Characters: No change.

16th & 15th Characters: Replace the Dark Vinespawn Elder with a Greater Dark Vinespawn.

Read the third cut scene now.

Part Four: Air Drop

Once the PCs defeat the vinespawn, they can make their way to the shore and in the tree line, locate their waiting allies.

Hidden at the edge of the tree line a group of men in light armor sooth several large birds that nervously peck at them. The birds look like owls larger than a horse, with blood red feathers and a wicked black beak. Strange metallic tubes, an eberron dragonshard and a host of wires protrude from the rear of each bird's head, and each wears a military saddle.

The Obsidian Watchers, an elite intelligence gathering unit, are made up of three men (a human [Ikhn], a half-orc [Vazdadhen], and a teifling [Illario]) from the Cabal of Shadows and three men (a half-elf [Sgt. Jhalon; Bluff +10] and two goblins [Gogo and Logo]) from the Blackwheel Company's Arclight Battalion. The group was training together, spying on Covenant activity in the area as part of the recent secret alliance between the Cabal and the Arclight Battalion. A DC 14 Knowledge (nature) check reveals that the mounts are indeed giant owls, but they are not natural. A DC 14 Knowledge (the planes) confirms that they are fiendish.

As soon as the PCs make themselves known, Sgt. Jhalon waves them over. Jhalon explains that they have been waiting for the PCs, but is noticeably guarded if the PCs ask after what his mission was before the battle began or why he and his troops were in the area; especially if any of the PCs are obviously part of the Covenant of Light. If pressed he will admit they were training together, but says he is not at liberty to give more information. The fiendish birds are particularly suited to aerial reconnaissance being immune to traditional flaming arrows that are a bane to other feather mounts, but also being especially resilient to the surgeries needed to attached the stealth device.

The Obsidian Watchers plan to activate the artificer's device that is affixed to the brain of each fiendish giant owl, surrounding it in a *sphere of invisibility* spell, and then each owl will carry the a PC silently over the target zone in the center of the *End of Days*. The PCs will be released from a high altitude with a *feather fall* *talisman*, just like a normal MAAD. Any story objects that provide bonuses to a MAAD, apply to this drop as well. The Watchers are NOT willing to fly close to the ship and drop them off, afraid not only that the great bird's wings will get caught in the ship's rigging, but that the ship's protective enchantments will make them visible if they get to close.

Help: Right before the PCs are ready to leave, Illario asks if the PCs are injured or require any aid in their attack. If they wish, he can invoke the Traveler to bestow his blessing upon the PCs. Ilario is a 7th-level cleric with the following spell list (DC 13 + spell level): 0— *cure minor wounds* (2), *detect magic* (2), *detect poison*, *mending*; 1st— *bless*, *cure light wounds* (2), *disguise self*, *protection from law*, *shield of faith*; 2nd— *aid*, *cure moderate wounds* (2), *invisibility*, *lesser restoration*; 3rd— *cure serious wounds*, *dispel magic*, *magic vestment*, *nondetection*; 4th— *confusion*, *freedom of movement*.

Sgt. Jhalon does not want to wait very long, knowing that every second counts. Once the PCs are ready to go, proceed to the Stealth MAAD section below.

Stealth MAAD (Magic-Assisted Airship Drops)

The great bird's razor sharp talons latch onto your shoulders as it lifts off the ground. Sgt. Jhalon calls out, "Activate stealth mode!" Your pilot flips several switches and a momentary faint hum causes the bird to vibrate as it continues to climb, and then you, the bird, and your pilot fade from view. The jungle quickly gives way to waves as the enemy fleet quickly comes into view. Somewhere to your left you hear Jhalon shout, "Set wings for silent running!" The flapping of your owl stops as

it locks its wings and glides over the target. Seconds later you hear, “Deploy! Deploy! Deploy!” The rushing of air fills your ears as your mount lets go and you suddenly become visible.

It takes one minute to fly from the coastline to the drop zone. Successfully activating a *feather fall talisman* at the appropriate time during a MAAD means succeeding at a DC 11 Will save. The PCs make their Will save as soon as they jump. It takes two full rounds to land. Use the chart below to determine the success of their check.

Modifiers: Few situations are as difficult as a Magic-Assisted Airship Drop. While risk must exist, it's unrealistic to penalize 5% of players for rolling natural 1's on the Will save. Natural 1 rolls are not instantly fatal. Treat them as you would any other roll of the d20 in this unique situation. Players may always add an action point roll to this save. NPCs may (and perhaps should) encourage PCs with negative Will save modifiers to use magic or other means to help augment or offset that weakness during the drop. A DC 15 Tumble check successfully reduces any damage taken by 1d6 points. Casting a spell during freefall requires a Concentration check (DC 20 + spell level) due to the extreme conditions. The PCs may choose to take up to two half actions (standard or move or swift actions) during the drop (one per round) but doing so imposes a -5 penalty to their MAAD-drop roll.

Final Will Save Total	Result
1 or less	Death—Talisman not activated before impact, or talisman activated too soon (<i>feather fall</i> spell expires before impact)
2-3	3d6 falling damage, land prone—Talisman activated too early
4-5	2d6 falling damage, land prone—Talisman activated too early
6-7	1d6 falling damage, land prone—Talisman activated too early
8-9	Land Prone—Hard landing
10-19	Acceptable Landing
20-24	Flawless Landing—PC lands with a flourish, +2 competence bonus on Spot, Move Silent, Hide, and Listen checks as well as Initiative and attack rolls within three rounds of landing.
25+	Precision Landing—PC gains all the benefits of a Flawless Landing and may pick which square on the map they land.

Landing: To simulate the randomness of the landing, pick up all the PCs' minis (if plastic, but if metal use a proxy to avoid damaging it) and drop them from arm's length above the center of the MAAD landing zone on the deck. If any mini bounces off the side of the boat, place them at the edge, caught by the railing.

Foes: Have the PCs roll initiative immediately, though they are falling for two rounds. The first round, their foes are surprised, but they act in the second round. The entire ship is surrounded by an *invisibility purge* spell, so PCs that have further cloaked their descent may be detected. The PCs may choose to act, but taking actions during a MAAD drop affects the PC's ability to make a safe landing (see above). Once the PCs land (at the very end of the second round), proceed to combat and **Part Five**.

Part Five: All or Nothing

Unless the PCs have a creative way to avoid combat, Part Five consists of a mass, running combat as the PCs fight their way to the elemental core in order to plant and set off the *disjunction bomb*. This encounter is broken into two sections. The first described each of the rooms in the *End of Days* that the PCs might enter during the course of their efforts to sink the ship, while each room lists the crew members present, they do not stay there waiting for the PCs to come to them (see below). The second describes the ships efforts to repel borders, and the timing with which waves of enemies descend upon the party. The DM has discretion to increase or decrease the speed of the waves based on the PCs abilities so as to keep tension high, but not completely overwhelm the party.

The End of Days

The *End of Days* is an elemental galleon of epic proportions with a prodigious crew. It is protected from many spell effects that might be used to sink her, and hefty armor plates her soarwood hull. Costing as much as a small nation, the ship boasts dozens of arcane ballista and magical catapults capable of bombarding the shore from sea.

Spell Protections on the End of Days: Until the PCs detonate the *disjunction bomb* at the elemental core, the *End of Days* is protected as follows: *dimensional lock* (only prevents others from coming to the *End of Days*, spells that *teleport* individuals already on the ship work normally), *energy immunity (acid)*, *energy*

immunity (fire), invisibility purge, greater spell immunity (disintegrate, shrink object, warp wood, wood shape).

Use the DM Map of the *End of Days* as a reference for the description of each room.

1. **Forecastle (EL 9):** The gunnery crews (expert 1) are on standby in the forecandle under the watchful eye of their Tharashk commander.

Tharashk Ranger: Hp 45; *See Combat Statistics.*

Deneith Blackscale: Hp 57; *See Combat Statistics.*

Scaling the Encounter

11th Characters: Remove only the Deneith Blackscale.

12th Characters: Remove only the Tharashk Ranger.

14th Characters: No change.

15th Characters: Add an additional Tharashk Ranger.

16th Characters: Add an additional Deneith Blackscale and Tharashk Ranger.

2. **Supply Hold:** More supplies and ammunition are stored here. Noncombatant sailors barricade themselves inside the hold to seek refuge during the combat on deck.

3. **Galley (EL 5):** The cook plies his trade here, feeding the vast crew on a rotating schedule.

Cook: Hp 39; *See Combat Statistics.*

4. **Pantry:** There is a large selection of fresh water and food, but there is currently no one guarding it.

5. **Deck (EL 13):** The deck of the ship is a busy place full of barrels, boxes, siege equipment and ammunition. Pirates from the Captain's Alliance and soldiers from those parts of the Dragonmarked Houses loyal to the Table. While there are dozens of seamen, most of them are simple experts that flee combat. Only an elite few pose a threat to the PCs.

Deneith Swashbuckler: Hp 85; *See Combat Statistics.*

Deneith Warhulk: Hp 60; *See Combat Statistics.*

Maggago Pirates (3): Hp 71; *See Combat Statistics.*

Pirate Thugs (3): Hp 48; *See Combat Statistics.*

Scaling the Encounter

11th Characters: Remove the Deneith Swashbuckler and three Maggago Pirates.

12th Characters: Remove the Deneith Swashbuckler.

14th Characters: No change.

15th Characters: Add a second Deneith Warhulk.

16th Characters: Add a second Deneith Warhulk and Deneith Swashbuckler.

6. **Crow's Nest (EL 6):** The crow's nest is well lived in, as the Cannith Arcane Guard spends nearly all of his time here. The walls of the crow's nest give him cover from those on the deck below. The crow's nest can be reached by climbing the rigging (DC 10 Climb).

Cannith Arcane Guard: Hp 31; *See Combat Statistics.*

7. **Helm (EL 13):** The ship is controlled using this large enchanted wheel. Given the time of war, both the captain and first mate are here when the PCs attack. When the attack begins, they physically lock the wheel (DC 30 Open Locks) so no one can take control of the ship.

First Mate Daesor: Hp 83; *See Combat Statistics.*

Captain Jaegor d'Lylander: Hp 136; *See Combat Statistics.*

Scaling the Encounter

11th & 12th Characters: Remove First Mate Daesor.

14th Characters: No change.

15th & 16th Characters: Add Boson Fitts (same combat statistics as First Mate Daesor).

8. **First Mate's Quarters:** The first mate's quarters are empty.

9. **Captain's Quarters:** The captain's quarters are posh, but empty, during this conflict.

10-12. Crew Cabins (EL 11): Each of these communal cabins contains large numbers of sailors, some of who are dangerous thugs. Should a combat occur here, there are bunks every ten feet that cost an addition square to move through unless the character makes a DC 5 Jump check. These cabins have dozens of potential enemies, but they venture forth in small groups shown below.

Maggago Pirates (3): Hp 71; *See Combat Statistics.*

Pirate Thugs (2): Hp 48; *See Combat Statistics.*

Scaling the Encounter

11th Characters: Remove one Maggago Pirate and one Pirate Thug.

12th Characters: Remove one Maggago Pirate.

14th Characters: Add one Maggago Pirate.

15th Characters: Add one Maggago Pirate and one Cannith Arcane Guard.

16th Characters: Add one Deneith Blackscale and one Cannith Arcane Guard.

13. Cargo Hold: The cargo hold is full of supplies the armada will need to occupy Stormreach. It is empty of dangers, but should combat occur here, there are many stacks of crates that complicate combat, allowing attacks to seek cover, gain a height advantage, or push over a stack onto a foe as a standard action (2d6 points of damage plus knock prone; DC 15 Reflex negates).

14. Stable (EL 10): Home to the various aerial mounts and the perytons that previously attacked the PCs, this room is staffed by Karmun the animal handler. A dozen horses are currently here.

Karmun: Hp 73; *See Combat Statistics.*

Torgrak: Hp 52; *See Combat Statistics.*

15. Elemental Core (EL 13): A large metal cylinder, warm to the touch, dominates the center of this room. Knowing that it is likely the target of any direct assault, Pluresa, one of the leading figures in the Captain's Alliance (the pirate's that are allied with the Table) has moved directly here in the company of her Pharlian bodyguard. This group does not leave the Elemental Core for the fight outside under any circumstances. If the PCs plant the device and have not defeated the foes in this room, they will try to deactivate the bomb, and that not being possible, they will move it away from the elemental core, defeating the party's plans.

Pharlian Shadow Operative: Hp 62; *See Combat Statistics.*

Pluresa the Storm Witch Siren: Hp 65; *See Combat Statistics.*

Orien Sentinel (3): Hp 31; *See Combat Statistics.*

Scaling the Encounter

11th Characters: Remove the Pharlian Shadow Operative and Pluresa has already used three of her 4th-level spell slots.

12th Characters: Remove two Orien Sentinels and Pluresa has already used two of her 4th-level spell slots.

14th Characters: Add one Orien Sentinel.

15th Characters: Add one Tharashk Ranger and one Orien Sentinel.

16th Characters: Add one Tharashk Ranger and one Deneith Warhulk.

Waves Crash Against an Unyielding Shore

The soldiers of the *End of Days* are dynamic beings that respond to the attack on their vessel as quickly and lethally as possible. The following timeline assumes that the PCs are standing on the deck as waves of enemies find them. If the PCs move in search of the elemental core (as is likely), the DM must adjudicate the length of time it takes for each wave to find the PCs. Of course if the PCs find some of their foes prematurely, the sailors are surprised the first round of the encounter. If killed, they do not show up again later.

Note that there are likely more foes here than the PCs can handle and battlefield control will be a key skill on the part of the PCs. The DM should be careful not to completely overwhelm the party but rather keep tensions high. If the combat suddenly swings wildly against the party, don't hesitate to have an NPC or two go below to "raise the alarm" or "look for aid." If the PCs are easily beating everything that comes at them, you may add more enemies from the crew cabins (rooms 10-12).

- **Round One:** The PCs begin the stealth MAAD insertion.
- **Round Two:** The foes on deck (5) and in the crow's nest (6) begin attack the PCs.
- **Round Four:** Those at the helm finish securing the helm (7) from tampering and join the fray.
- **Round Six:** The officers in the forecandle (1) move to see what the problem is and join the fight.

- **Round Nine:** A group of enemy sailors come on deck from their cabin (10).
- **Round Eleven:** The cook leaves the galley (3) to help his shipmates.
- **Round Fourteen:** A group of enemy sailors come on deck from their cabin (12).
- **Round Sixteen:** Karum leaves his stable (14) for the combat.
- **Round Twenty:** A group of enemy sailors come on deck from their cabin (11).

COMBAT STATISTICS

CANNITH ARCANE GUARD CR 6

Male Human Sorcerer 6

CN Medium Humanoid (Human)

Init +5; **Senses** Listen +0, Spot +0

Languages Common, draconic

AC 11 (+1 Dex), touch 11, flat footed 10

hp 31 (6 HD)

Fort +4, **Ref** +3, **Will** +5

Speed 30 ft

Melee longspear +2 (1d8-1)

Ranged dagger +4 (1d4-1/19-20)

Base Atk +3; **Grp** +2

Combat gear wand of enlarge person (2 charges), wand of lightning bolt (2 charges), wand of deep slumber (4 charges) potion of shield of faith +2, scroll of ice storm

Spells known

3rd (4/day; DC 16/18) (4/day) - *fireball*

2nd (6/day; DC 15/17) (6/day) - *mirror image*, *scorching ray*

1st (7/day; DC 14/16) (7/day) – *feather fall*, *mage armor*, *magic missile*, *shield*

0 (6/day; DC 13/15) (6/day) - *acid splash*, *detect magic*, *flare*, *mage hand*, *presdigitation*, *ray of frost*, *touch of fatigue*

Abilities Str 8, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 16

Feats greater spell focus (evocation), improved initiative, skill focus (concentration), spell focus (evocation)

Skills Listen +0, Spot +0, concentration +14, knowledge (arcana) +5, spellcraft +9, tumble +5, use magic device +7

Possessions combat gear plus longspear, dagger, spyglass

Familiar: toad (14hp)

Hook *This guard is stocked with Cannith armament; all manner of wands, scrolls, and potions dangle from his leather tunic.*

CAPTAIN JAEGOR D'LYRANDER (MEMBER OF THE TABLE)

CR 12

Male high elf fighter 4/swashbuckler 1/dervish 7

AL CN Medium humanoid (elf)

Init +5; **Senses** Listen +16, Spot +1, low-light vision

Languages Common, Elven, and Sylvan

AC 27, touch 18, flat-footed 21 (+3 Dex, +6 armor, +3 shield, +2 deflection, +2 dervish, +1 insight)

hp 136 (12 HD)

Immune sleep

Resist +2 vs. enchantment

Fort +13, **Ref** +9, **Will** +7

Speed 40 ft. (5 squares)

Melee +1 *merciful longsword* +17/+12/+7 (1d8+8/19-20 plus 1d6 merciful) AND

Melee +1 *shocking shortsword* +16/+11 (1d6+3/19-20 plus 1d6 electrical)

Ranged composite longbow +16/+11/+6 (1d8+4/x3)

Base Atk +12; **Grp** +17

Atk Options Dance of death, dervish dance (+4 to hit and damage) 4/day, elaborate parry

Abilities Str 16 [20], Dex 17, Con 16 [20], Int 13, Wis 12, Cha 8

SQ Elf traits, movement mastery

Feats Combat Expertise, Dodge, Improved Two Weapon Fighting, Mobility, Power Attack, Spring Attack, Two Weapon Fighting, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (longsword), Weapon Specialization (longsword)

Skills Balance +8, Bluff +3, Diplomacy +3, Listen +16, Perform (Dance) +14, Sense Motive +5, Tumble +15

Possessions *Mithral breastplate* +1, +1 *animated heavy steel shield*, +1 *merciful longsword*, +1 *shocking keen sword*, *belt of strength* +4, *Amulet of health* +4, *ring of deflection* +2, *dusty rose prism ioun stone*, *potion of fly*, *boots of haste*, MW longsword, MW shortsword, might composite longbow [+4], 20 MW arrows.

Dervish Dance (Ex): A dervish can become a whirling dancer of death a certain number of times per day. While in this dervish dance, she can take a full attack action (for melee attacks only) and still move up to her speed. However, the dervish must move a minimum of 5 feet between each attack when using this ability, and she cannot return to a square she just exited (though she may return to that square later during her full attack). The dervish is subject to attacks of opportunity while dancing, but may tumble normally as part of her move. A dervish prevented from completing her move is also prevented from finishing her full attack.

If a dervish wields a slashing weapon while in a dervish dance, she gains a bonus on her attack and damage rolls. This bonus is +1 at 1st level, and it increases by an extra +1 at every odd-numbered level thereafter.

A dervish may only perform a dervish dance while wielding a slashing weapon (she may use a double weapon, or multiple weapons, only if both ends of the weapon or all weapons are of the slashing type). She cannot perform a dervish dance in any armor heavier than light or if she is using a shield. While dancing, a dervish cannot use skills or abilities that involve concentration or require her to remain still, such as Move Silently, Hide, or Search. A dervish with the bardic music ability can, however, sing while she dances, and a dervish can also use the combat Expertise feat while in a dance. A dervish cannot perform a dervish dance while under the effect of a rage or frenzy ability.

A dervish can perform a dervish dance only once per encounter. A dervish dance lasts 1 round for every two ranks of Perform (dance) that the character has. At the end of a dervish dance, the character becomes fatigued for the duration of the encounter (unless she is a 9th-level dervish, at which point this limitation no longer applies).

Movement Mastery (Ex): A dervish is so certain of her movements that she is unaffected by adverse conditions. When making a Jump, Perform (dance), or Tumble check, she may take 10 even if stress and distraction would normally prevent her from doing so.

Dance of Death: At 4th level, a dervish gains the use of the Cleave feats while performing a dervish dance, even if she does not meet the prerequisites for the feat. She does not have to move 5 feet before making the extra attack granted by this ability.

Elaborate Parry (Ex): When she attains 7th level, a dervish gains an extra +4 bonus to Armor Class when she chooses to fight defensively or use total defense in melee combat.

Hook “Send out your best and I’ll fight him, one on one.”

COOK CR 5

Male Warforged Druid 5

NG Medium Construct (Living Construct)

Init +1; **Senses** Listen+3, Spot+3

Languages Common, Druidic, Sylvan

AC 15 (+3 armor, +1 dex, +1 natural), touch 11, flat-footed 14

hp 39 (5 HD); DR 4/Slashing

Immune Living Construct traits

Fort +7, **Ref** +2, **Will** +7 (+4 vs *polymorph*)

Weakness Living Construct Traits

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares) or 50 ft. (10 squares)

Melee Scimitar +5 (1d6+2/18-20x2)

Ranged Sling +4 (1d4+2)

Base Atk +3; **Grp** +5

Atk Options Predator Form (+4 Str, +4 Natural Armor, Bite +8 1d6+7, 50 ft. movement)

Combat gear *wand of lesser vigor*, 20 sling bullets

Spells prepared (CL 5th):

3rd: *call lightning* (DC 16), *poison* (DC 15)

2nd: *flaming sphere* (DC 15), *mass snake's swiftness*, *bull's strength*

1st: *camouflage*, *cure light wounds*, *entangle* (DC 14), *longstrider*

Abilities Str 14, Dex 16, Con 16, Int 11, Wis 16, Cha 10

SQ nature sense, resist nature's lure, shapeshift, trackless step, wild empathy +7 (+3 magical beasts), woodland stride, does not need to eat or drink

Feats Improved Damage Reduction, Ironwood Body

Skills Concentration +11, Heal +10, Knowledge (geography) +2, Knowledge (nature) +8, Listen+3, Spot+3, Survival +12

Possessions combat gear plus backpack, healer's kit, *pearl of power* (1st lvl), *periapt of wisdom* +2

Hook *This rather unusual warforged is covered with bark-like plates that bare a resemblance to pine bark, but are rigid an appear nearly metallic in luster and hardness.*

Deneith Blackscale—Pressgang Mercenary CR 8

Male Blackscale Lizardfolk Barbarian 5

N Large Monstrous Humanoid (Reptilian)

Init +3; **Senses** Darkvision; Listen +6, Spot +1

Languages Common, Draconic

AC 28 (-1 Size, +3 Dex, +8 Natural, +7 Armor, +1 Deflection), touch 13, flat-footed 25

hp 57 (9 HD)

Resist Acid 5

Fort +9, **Ref** +9, **Will** +7

Speed 40

Melee Greatsword +19/+14 (3d6+13/19-20) OR

Melee 2 Claws +17 (1d6+8) AND

Melee Bite +12 (1d6+4)

Ranged Javelin +12/+7 (1d8+8)

Space/Reach 10-ft/10-ft

Base Atk +9; **Grp** +21

Atk Options Power Attack, Rage 2/day

Combat gear +1 Greatsword, 4 Javelins

Abilities Str 27, Dex 16, Con 16, Int 8, Wis 12, Cha 6

SQ Hold Breath, Improved Uncanny Dodge, Trap Sense +1

Feats Cleave/Power Attack, Weapon Focus (Greatsword)

Skills Balance +4, Jump +6, Listen +6, Spot +1, Survival +13, Swim +18

Possessions combat gear plus +2 *Belt of Strength*, +2 *Breastplate*, +2 *Gloves of Dexterity*, +1 *Amulet of Natural Armor*, +1 *Ring of Protection*, +1 *Cloak of Resistance*

Hair *This massive, lizardfolk tribe has been bred for raw strength and aggression. Glossy black scales cover the entirety of its heavily-muscled body. It grips a serrated greatsword in its clawed hands.*

Deneith Swashbuckler CR 9

Female Human Swashbuckler 9

CN Medium Humanoid

Init +5; **Senses** Listen +1, Spot +1

Languages Common, Elven, Gnome

AC 22 (+5 armor, +4 Dex, +1 Natural, +2 Deflection), touch 16, flat-footed 21

hp 85 (9 HD)

Fort +10, **Ref** +11, **Will** +6 (grace)

Speed 30-ft/x4

Melee +1 *keen silver rapier* +14/+9 (1d6+6/15-20) AND

Melee dagger +13 (1d4+4/19-20)

Base Atk +9; **Grp** +12

Atk Options improved flanking

Def Options Dodge, Two-Weapon Defense (+1 AC)

Abilities Str 17, Dex 20, Con 15, Int 14, Wis 13, Cha 14

SQ acrobatic charge

Feats Combat Expertise, Dodge, Two-Weapon Defense, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (Rapier)

Skills Climb +11, Balance +18, Bluff +13, Diplomacy +15, Jump +16, Listen +1, Sense Motive +10, Spot +1, Tumble +18, Use Rope +15

Possessions +1 chain shirt, +1 keen silver rapier, +1 amulet of natural armor, ring of protection +2, gloves of Dexterity +2, cloak of resistance +2, silver dagger, shortbow, backpack

Grace (Ex): When wearing light or no armor, and carrying a light load, gain a +1 competence bonus on Reflex saves.

Insightful Strike (Ex): When wearing light or no armor, and carrying a light load, gain a +2 bonus on damage rolls with light or finessable weapons. This bonus does not apply to creatures immune to critical hits.

Dodge (Ex): When wearing light or no armor, and carrying a light load, gain a +1 Dodge Bonus to AC against a designated foe.

Acrobatic Charge (Ex): You can charge in situations where others cannot. You can charge over difficult terrain that normally slows movement, or through allies blocking your path. You can also run down steep stairs, leap down from a balcony, or tumble over tables to get to your target.

Improved Flanking (Ex): You gain an additional +2 bonus on attacks when flanking an opponent.

Hook *This silver-haired swordswoman has the three-headed chimera crest of her House emblazoned on purple field sewn into the chest of her chain armor. Her weapon, a glittering silver rapier is a perfect match for her shining hair.*

DENEITH WARHULK—PRESSGANG MERCENARY CR 7

Male Ogre Barbarian 2/Warhulk 2

CE Large Giant

Init ; -1 **Senses** Listen +4, Spot +2

Languages Common, Giant

AC 16, touch 8, flat-footed 16

hp 60 (8 HD)

Fort +12, **Ref** 0, **Will** 0

Speed 40 ft.

Melee Greataxe +10 melee (3d6+10)

Ranged Javelin +1 ranged (1d8+7)

Space/Reach 10 ft. x 10 ft.

Base Atk +5; **Grp** +16

Atk Options Power Attack, Cleave, Great Swing

Special Actions Rage (+4 Str, +16 hp, -2 AC, +2 to saving throws against mind-affecting Will effects, lasts for 7 rounds)

Combat gear Greataxe, 4 javelins.

Abilities Str 25, Dex 8, Con 15, Int 6, Wis 10, Cha 7

SQ Low-light vision, No Time To Think, Great Swing

Feats Cleave, Improved Toughness, Power Attack

Skills Climb +9, Intimidate +2, Listen +4, Spot +2

Possessions combat gear plus hide armor

Great Swing (Ex): The warhulk can take a full round action to attack up to three targets he threatens that are adjacent to each other. One attack roll is made and applied against the AC of each target. Cleaves may take place as normal.

Hook *One of the more elite mercenaries recruited to the service of House Deneith, this particular ogre fights not just with power, but with trained discipline.*

FIRSTMATE DAESOR**CR 10**

Male human duskblade 10
 AL CN Medium humanoid (human)
Init +6; Senses Listen -1, Spot -1
Languages Common, Giant, Elven

AC 24, touch 12, flat-footed 22 (+9 armor, +2 Dex, +3 shield)
hp 83 (10 HD)
Fort +14, **Ref** +7, **Will** +9

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)
Melee +1 *shocking rapier* +12/+7 (1d6+5 plus 1d6 electrical/15-20)
Base Atk +10; **Grp** +14
Atk Options Arcane channeling (cast touch spell as part of a melee attack), quick cast (2/day quicken a standard action spell)
Combat Gear *potion of cure serious wounds*, *smokestick*
Duskblade Spells Known (CL 10th):
 3rd (3/day, 1 used)—†*crown of might* (+2 STR for 10 hours, immediate action end spell for +8 STR for 1 round), *doom scarabs* (standard, 60 ft. cone-shaped burst, 5d6 damage Will half, those with SR that fail SR give you 1d4 temporary hp)
 2nd (9/day)—*dimension door*, *see invisibility*, *sure strike* (swift, next attack gains +3 insight to hit), *swift fly*
 1st (10/day)—*blade of blood* (swift, for 10 rounds weapon does +1d6 damage or +3d6 if you do 5 points of damage to yourself), *Kelgore's fire bolt* (standard, 200 ft., 5d6 fire Reflex half, does 1d6 to SR resistant targets), *shocking grasp*, *stand* (swift, 50 ft., stand as free action with no AO), *swift expeditious retreat*
 0 (6/day)—*acid splash* (+12 ranged), *disrupt undead* (+12 ranged), *ray of frost* (+12 ranged), *touch of fatigue* (+13 melee)
 †Already cast
Spell-Like Abilities (CL 10th):
 5/day—*dancing lights*, *detect magic*, *flare* (DC 12), *ghost sound* (DC 12), *read magic*

Abilities Str 16 [18], Dex 12, Con 14, Int 14, Wis 8, Cha 10
SQ Armored mage (light, medium, and heavy shield), spell power (+2 to SR checks against opponents Edden has injured)
Feats Blind-fight, Combat Casting, Improved Critical (rapier), Improved Initiative, Improved Toughness, Weapon Focus (rapier)
Skills Concentration +15 (+19 cast defensively), Jump +17, Knowledge (local) +15, Spellcraft +15, Swim +22
Possessions combat gear plus +1 *glamoured mithral fullplate*, +1 *steel shield*, +1 *shocking rapier*, +3 *cloak of resistance*, *ring of swimming*, masterwork rapier

Karmun**CR 10**

Male human druid 10
 CN Medium humanoid (human)
Init +4; Senses Listen +18, Spot +18
Languages Common

AC 21, touch 11, flat-footed 20; (+6 armor, +1 deflection, +4 natural)
hp 73 (10 HD); **DR** 10/adamantine (100 point *stoneskin*)
Immune grapple, negative energy, poison
Resist +4 vs. fey spell-like abilities, acid 20, fire 20
Fort +9, **Ref** +3, **Will** +12

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)
Melee +1 *scimitar* +7 (1d6/18-20)
Ranged mwk sling +8 (1d4)
Base Atk +7; **Grp** +6
Special Actions wild shape (4/day, Large)
Combat Gear *potion of cure serious wounds*
Druid Spells Prepared (CL 10th):

5th—[†]*death ward*, [†]*stoneskin*, *wall of thorns*
 4th—*dispel magic*, *flamestrike* (DC 21), [†]*freedom of movement*, *ice storm*
 3rd—*call lightning* (DC 20), [†]*greater magic fang*, *sleet storm*, *wind wall*
 2nd—[†]*barkskin*, *flaming sphere* (DC 19), *nature's favor*, ^{††}*resist energy* (x2)
 1st—*entangle*, *faerie fire* (x2), *foundation of stone*, *hide from animals* (DC 16), *produce flame*
 0—*create water*, *cure minor wounds*, *detect magic* (x2), *detect poison*, *flare* (DC 17)
[†]Already cast

Abilities Str 9, Dex 10, Con 14, Int 8, Wis 20, Cha 8
SQ trackless step, wild empathy (+9), woodland stride
Feats Combat Casting, Greater Spell Focus (evocation), Improved Initiative, Natural Spell, Spell Focus (evocation)
Skills Concentration +15 (+19 cast defensive), Listen +18, Spellcraft +12, Spot +18
Possessions combat gear plus +1 *wild wooden breastplate*, +1 *scimitar*, *ring of deflection*, military saddle, *lesser rod of extend* (used), *lesser rod of quicken*, masterwork sling, 5 silver bullets, 5 byesk bullets, 5 adamantine bullets.

Hook “I will bring the fury of the elements upon you!”

Maggago Pirates [Raging] CR 6

Male half-orc barbarian 2/fighter 2/ranger 2
 CN Medium humanoid (orc)
Init +5; **Senses** Listen +7, Spot +4; darkvision 60'
Languages Common, Orc

AC 14, touch 9, flat-footed 13 (+1 Dex, -2 rage, +5 armor)
hp 71 (6 HD)
Fort +12, **Ref** +4, **Will** +2

Speed 40 ft. (8 squares)
Melee +1/+1 *orc double axe* +12/+12/+7 (1d8+8/x3) OR
Melee mwk battle axe +12/+7 (1d8+11/x3)
Ranged mwk javelin +7 (1d6+6)
Base Atk +6; **Grp** +10
Atk Options Rage 1/day

Abilities Str 18 [22], Dex 13, Con 16 [20], Int 6, Wis 10, Cha 6
SQ Uncanny dodge, wild empathy
Feats Combat Reflexes, Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Shadow Marches Warmonger, Track, Two Weapon Fighting, Weapon Focus (orc double axe)
Skills Handle Animal +1, Listen +7, Spot +4, Survival +7
Possessions mithril breastplate, +1/+1 *orc double axe*, masterwork battle axe, 5 masterwork javelins

Hook “For the Captain’s Alliance and Pluresa!”

PHARLIAN SHADOW OPERATIVE CR 10

Female Elf Rogue 3/Urban Ranger 2/Shadow Hunter 5
 NE Medium Humanoid
Init +4 **Senses** Listen +10, Spot +14
Languages Common, Elven

AC 24 (+4 Dex, +6 armor, +2 shield, +2 deflection), touch 16, flat-footed 20
hp 62 (10 HD)
Fort +11, **Ref** +16, **Will** +4 (+6 vs. enchantment)

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)
Melee +1 longsword +12/+7 (1d8+3/19-20 plus poison)
Ranged +2 composite longbow +15/+10 (1d8+4 x3 plus poison), OR
Ranged +2 composite longbow +13/+13/+7 (1d8+4 x3 plus poison) with Rapid Shot
Base Atk +9; **Grp** +11

<p>Atk Options Combat Expertise, favored enemy elves +2, sneak attack (+2d6)</p> <p>Special Actions cloak of shadows, deeper shadows, shadow sense, shadowblind (+13 ranged touch, DC 15)</p> <p>Spell-Like Abilities (CL 15th): 8/day—darkness 2/day—shadow conjuration 1/day—prying eyes</p>
<p>Abilities Str 14, Dex 18, Con 12, Int 13, Wis 10, Cha 10</p> <p>SQ notice secret doors, poison use, trapfinding, wild empathy +1</p> <p>Feats Combat Expertise, Greater Dragonmark (Mark of Shadow), Least Dragonmark (Shadow), Lesser Dragonmark (Shadow), Rapid Shot, Urban Tracking</p> <p>Skills Balance +4, Disguise +10, Escape Artist +9, Gather Information +16, Hide + 15, Move Silently +14, Open Lock +7, Search +15, Jump +2, Tumble +12, Use Rope +6</p> <p>Possessions +1 darkleaf breastplate, +1 longsword, +2 composite longbow (+2 Str bonus), 20 arrows, +1 buckler, ring of protection +2, darkweave cloak of resistance +2, hat of disguise, masterwork thieves tools, wand of cure light wounds (25 charges), potion of invisibility, potion of shield, 2 doses of large scorpion venom (DC 18 1d6/1d6 Str)</p>
<p>Poison (Ex): The shadow operative's weapons and arrows start the battle pre-treated with Purple Worm poison (DC 24 1d6/2d6 Str).</p> <p>Improved Darkness (Ex): The shadow operative can use the darkness power of the Mark of Shadow an additional number of times per day equal to her class level.</p> <p>Deeper Shadows (Ex): When the shadow operative uses the darkness power of her dragonmark, she can expend a second use of the dragonmark to produce an effect identical to deeper darkness that lasts 24 hours or until dismissed.</p> <p>Shadowblind (Sp): The shadow operative can use her dragonmark to blind enemies with a cluster of shadow. Using shadowblind is a standard action that provokes attacks of opportunity and requires one use of his darkness power. Target a creature within 50 feet. That creature must make a Will save (DC 15) or be blinded for 1 minute.</p> <p>Cloak of Shadows (Sp): Using cloak of shadows is a swift action that does not provoke attacks of opportunity, but requires one use of her darkness power. The shadow operative gains concealment (20% miss chance) for a duration of 5 minutes. In addition, she can use the hide skill while being observed.</p> <p>Shadowsight (Sp): The shadow operative may expend one of her uses of darkness to gain Darkvision 60' that ignores the effects of darkness and deeper darkness. The duration of shadowsight is 24 hours. The shadow operative begins the battle with shadowsight active.</p>
<p>Hook <i>A regal elf, tall but slight of build, she is clad in all black clothing with a cloak that seems to absorb the light. She wields confidence as easily as she seems to wield her sword and bow.</i></p>
<p>Pirate Thugs CR 7 Male human fighter 2/rogue 5 AL CN Medium humanoid (human) Init +6; Senses Listen +9, Spot +9 Languages Common</p>
<p>AC 17, touch 12, flat-footed 15 (+5 armor, +2 Dex); Uncanny Dodge hp 48 (7 HD) Fort +6, Ref +6, Will +0; Evasion</p>
<p>Speed 30 ft. (6 squares) Melee mwk great club +11 (1d10+6) OR Melee unarmed strike +9 (1d3+4 lethal or nonlethal) Ranged light crossbow +8 (1d8/19-20) Base Atk +5; Grp +13 Atk Options Sneak attack +3d6, Sunder (+19 with great club) Combat Gear <i>potion of invisibility</i>, smokestick, tanglefoot bag</p>
<p>Abilities Str 18, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 8, Wis 8, Cha 8 SQ Trapfinding, trap sense +1</p>

Feats Improved Grapple, Improved Initiative, Improved Sunder, Improved Unarmed Strike, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (great club)
Skills Climb +6, Hide +10, Intimidate +9, Listen +7, Move Silently +10, Search +9, Sleight of Hand +10, Spot +9, Tumble +10
Possessions *Studded leather armor* +2, masterwork great club, light crossbow, 10 masterwork bolts, thieves' tools.

Hook "You lookin' at me?!?!"

Pluresa the Storm Witch Siren CR 12

Female siren sorcerer 4/dread witch 3

CE Medium fey (Aquatic)

Init +4; **Senses** low-light vision, *see invisibility*; Listen +3, Spot +3

Languages Common, sylvan

AC 23, touch 19, flat-footed 19 (+4 Dex, +5 deflection, +4 *mage armor*)

hp 65 (11 HD); **DR** 5/cold iron

Resist +5 vs. fear

Fort +3, **Ref** +9, **Will** +14

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares); swim 60 ft.

Melee short sword +4 (1d6/19-20) OR
touch +4 (1d4 Int)

Base Atk +4; **Grp** +4

Atk Options *Charming song*, intelligence damage, master of terror (+1 DC to fear spells)

Special Actions absorb fear, fearful empowerment (1/day), soothing touch

Combat Gear *potion of cure serious wounds*

Sorcerer Spells Known (CL 11th):

4th (5/day)—*confusion* (DC 21), *phantasmal killer* (DC 22)

3rd (7/day)—*dispel magic*, *hold person* (DC 19), *lightning bolt* (DC 18)

2nd (7/day)—*false life*[†], *scare* (DC 19), *scorching ray* (+8 ranged touch), *see invisibility*[†]

1st (7/day)—*bane* (DC 18), *cause fear* (DC 18), *mage armor*[†], *magic missile*, *ray of enfeeblement* (+8 ranged touch)

0 (6/day)—*acid splash* (+8 ranged touch), *detect magic*, *detect poison*, *light*, *mage hand*, *message*, *prestidigitation*, *read magic*

[†]Already cast

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 11th):

1/day—*fog cloud*, *improved invisibility*, *polymorph self*.

Abilities Str 10, Dex 18, Con 13, Int 13, Wis 16, Cha 20

SQ wild empathy (+7)

Feats Combat Expertise, Practiced Spellcaster, Spell Focus (enchantment), Spell Focus (necromancy), Unnatural Will

Skills Concentration +14, Diplomacy +6, Heal +10, Hide +11, Intimidate +10, Knowledge (arcana) +4, Perform (dance) +19, Perform (sing) +19, Spellcraft +7, Swim +15, Survival +10

Possessions *glamoured wings of flying* (no visible wings), *pink and green sphere ioun stone*, *amulet of health* +2

Absorb Fear (Su) Starting at 2nd level, you can turn your own fear, whether magical or mystical in origin, into extra power for your spells. Any time you are exposed to a condition that could make you shaken, all your spells function at +1 caster level; if the condition could make you frightened, they function at +2 caster level, if panicked, they function at +3 caster level. These bonuses last for the duration of the fear effect, or for a number of rounds equal to your charisma modifier, whichever is less. (Of course, if you fail your saving throw against the condition, you might not be in a position to use the bonuses, but you do have them.) These bonuses are treated in all ways as though had failed the save. In other words, if you are subject to a spell that causes panic on a failed save but only frightens those who make the save, you gain the bonus from being panicked even if you make the save. You can, instead of gaining these bonuses, choose to cast a single extra spell; this casting does not use up a spell slot. You must make this choice the instant you are subject to the fear effect, and once you have made your choice you must cast the spell within a number of rounds equal to your Charisma modifier. You can cast an additional cantrip if shaken, an additional 1st-level spell if frightened, or an additional 2nd-level spell if panicked. If

you are subject to a second fear effect while still enjoying the effects of the first—either the granted benefits or holding the extra spell—you must decide whether to keep the original effect or replace it with the new one; you cannot keep benefit from more than one fear effect at a time.

Charming Song (Sp) At will, a siren can sing a special song that functions like a *charm person* spell (caster level 2nd; save DC 16), except that it lasts for 11 hours and affects every creature that hears it.

Fearful Empowerment (Su) Starting at 3rd level, once per day you can add the fear descriptor to any spell you cast that has some sort of visual manifestation. Creatures targeted by a spell modified by fearful empowerment must make a Will save (DC equal to 10 + your class level + your Cha modifier) or become shaken for 1d4 rounds; this is in addition to any other effects the spell might have. Your save DC bonuses from master of terror apply to this spell.

Intelligence Damage (Su) Any creature hit by a siren's touch attack takes 1d4 points of Intelligence damage (or 2d4 on a critical hit).

Soothing Touch (Su) A siren, if it desires, can use its touch to restore 1d6 points of damage caused by any siren.

Hook *"Come on, do it for me..."*

Orien Sentinel CR 3

Male Human Knight 3

LN Medium Humanoid

Init +0; **Senses** Listen -1, Spot -1

Languages Common, Elven

AC 17 (Mwk Breastplate, +1 *Buckler*), Touch 10, Flat-footed 17

hp 31 (3 HD)

Fort +3, **Ref** +1, **Will** +2 (+1 Will vs target of Fighting Challenge)

Speed 20-ft

Melee Mwk Bastard Sword, one-handed +7 (1d10+2) OR

Melee Mwk Bastard Sword, two-handed +6 (1d10+3)

Ranged Mwk Mighty Composite Longbow [+2 Str] +4 (1d8+2)

Base Atk +3; **Grp** +5

Def Options Shield Block

Special Actions Knight's Challenge

Combat gear Potion of *cure light wounds* (x2), Oil of *magic weapon*

Abilities Str 15, Dex 10, Con 14, Int 13, Wis 8, Cha 12

SQ Knight's Code

Feats Exotic Weapon Proficiency (Bastard Sword), Improved Buckler Defense, Mounted Combat, Weapon Focus (Bastard Sword)

Skills Bluff +3, Handle Animal +7, Intimidate +7, Knowledge (nobility and royalty) +2, Listen -1, Ride +8, Spot -1

Knight's Code: Gains no bonus for flanking (still grants it to others) - can choose to use the bonus, but that counts as breaking the code; never strikes a flat-footed opponent; never deals lethal damage against an unarmed foe.

Knight's Challenge: 2/day; *Fighting Challenge* +1: As a swift action, issue challenge against target with an Intelligence of 5 or greater, which has some sort of language, and a CR greater than or equal to 1. Knight then gains a +1 morale bonus on Will saves and a +1 morale bonus on attack rolls and damage rolls against the target of this ability. If the chosen foe reduces the knight to 0 or less hit points, he loses two uses of the knight's challenge ability for the day. The Fighting Challenge lasts 6 rounds.

Shield Block: During his action, the Knight can designate a single opponent as the target of this ability. His shield bonus against that foe increases by 1.

Bulwark of Defense: An opponent that begins its turn in the knight's threatened area treats all the squares the knight threatens as difficult terrain.

Hook *The Couriers Guild takes the defense of their messages and transportation seriously. This particular guard has a white sun ringed by unicorn horns etched vividly into the hilt of his blade.*

THARASHK RANGER Half-Orc Ranger 6 CE Medium Humanoid (Orc) Init +2; Senses Darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +10, Spot +10 Languages Common, Orc	CR 6
AC 17, touch 12, flat-footed 15; +2 Dex, +5 armor hp 45 (6 HD) Fort +6, Ref +7, Will +3	
Speed 30 ft. Melee +1 <i>heavy pick</i> +9/+4 (1d6+5/x4) AND Melee +1 <i>heavy pick</i> +9/+4 (1d6+3/x4) Ranged Mwk Composite Longbow +9/+4 (1d8) Base Atk +6; Grp +9 Combat gear <i>potion of bull's strength</i> , <i>potion of cure light wounds</i> Spells prepared (CL 3rd) 1st (DC 12) - <i>entangle</i> , <i>longstrider</i>	
Abilities Str 18, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 8, Wis 13, Cha 6 SQ Wild Empathy (+4), Combat Style (Two-Weapon Fighting), Favored Enemy (elves) +4, orc blood Feats Endurance, Improved Two-Weapon Fighting, Oversized Two-Weapon Fighting, Track, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Focus (heavy pick) Skills Climb +12, Jump +12, Listen +10, Spot +10, Survival +10 Possessions combat gear plus +1 <i>heavy pick</i> (2), +1 <i>chain shirt</i> , masterwork composite longbow	
Hook <i>A toothy grin splits the jaw line of this unusually slim half-orc. Although gaunt, the presence of strength emanates from beneath the intricately-worked chain ringlets of his armor. In each hand, a pair of wicked-looking war picks commands attention and respect.</i>	
Torgrak Dire bat animal companion N Large animal Init +7; Senses Listen +12, Spot +8; blindsense 40 ft.	CR -
AC 29, touch 16, flat-footed 22; (-1 size, +7 Dex, +9 natural, +4 armor) hp 52 (8 HD); DR 10/adamantine (100 point <i>stoneskin</i>) Immune grapple, negative energy, poison Resist acid 20, fire 20 Fort +9, Ref +13, Will +7; evasion	
Speed 20 ft. (4 squares); fly 40 ft. (good) Melee bite +11 (2d6+7, magic) Space 10 ft.; Reach 5 ft. Base Atk +6; Grp +14	
Abilities Str 19, Dex 24, Con 17, Int 2, Wis 14, Cha 6 SQ devotion, link, share spells Feats Alertness, Improved Natural Attack (bite) Stealthy Skills Hide +5, Listen +12, Move Silently +12, Spot +8 Possessions chain shirt barding	
Tricks Attack (x2), Combat Riding, Fetch, Track	

Once the PCs place the *disjunction bomb*, move to **Ending the Adventure**.

Ending the Adventure

Once the PCs place the *disjunction bomb* or are unable to do any more, choose the appropriate read aloud text. If the PCs have a different ending through creative efforts on their part, the DM will have to adjust

accordingly. PCs that survive round one receive the story object EXEG01 - Survivor of the First Strike. Those parties that sink the *End of Days* receive the story object EXEG02 - Savior of the Factions.

Success

If the PCs have successfully placed the device and scuttled the *End of Days*, proceed with the following read aloud text.

Radiant Hold is breached and cannot stand. Everyone knows it is time to run, but without someone to stay behind and fight, no one will get away. Lord Xandrin Corvalis looks grimly at the other notables, "I will stay, who will stand with us?" Dozens of paladins and holy knights of the Covenant of Light step behind him, but then all is quiet as the rest stare silent.

Unexpectedly the Voice of the Storm speaks, "Deondag, Master of Rites, and his cloud giant brethren will defend you to the death. Go now, defend the walls with darkness and light while safeguard the refugees."

Stormrider shakes his head without speaking and leads his people away knowing some sort of treachery is imminent. The Blackwheel have already retired from the field, taking supplies and making contact with their undersea ship.

The Voice of the Storm seeks out Deondag, encased in the body of a warforged titan, in the courtyard. "You will stay behind just long enough cover our escape, then leave the knights to their fate."

The cloud giant in the titan's body nods. As he walks away, the Voice of the Storm smiles to himself, knowing the giant will never leave Radiant Hold alive and the Cabal will finally be free of his desires to control them.

As they flee through the sally port on into the jungle, the din of battle sweeps over the courtyard. When Radiant Hold comes under attack for the last time, the massive golden dragonshard hovering over its courtyard, the Starried Shard, holds off attackers with beams of holy energy as knights and possessed warforged titans do battle against the Table. When the fortress finally a short time later, as all knew it must, the dragonshard explodes in a final wave of righteous defense. The blast leaves a crater where Radiant Hold once stood, filled with the bodies of its defenders and attackers alike. The Table has claimed Stormreach, but it is a pyrrhic victory at best with a cost so high, they will be hard pressed to hold it.

The factions slip away amidst the destruction. Aboard the Tidal Wrath, they make their way south knowing that someday, when the time and place are right, they will gather again and rebuild their lost home and fight to control the Draconic Prophecy once more.

Failure

If the PCs have not placed the device and not scuttled the *End of Days*, proceed with the following read aloud text.

Radiant Hold is naught but ashes and bone. The refugees and the factions have fled to the shore, chased by the Table, hoping to find the Tidal Wrath waiting to spirit them to safety.

Gazing from the sandy shore, it looks as if the water burns. Flaming pieces of ships float and bob among the dead. Nothing is left of the Tidal Wrath or much of the Table's fleet. Only the End of Days remains, it is turning to fire on the crowd. Caught between the pursuing army and the bombarding ship, there is nowhere to run. The story of the four factions ends on a lonely unnamed shore. With no one left alive to tell it.

Event Treasure

If you are running *EXP-9 Endgame* as part of another event and the PCs successfully survived the first strike or destroyed the *End of Days*, please have each PC record one of the following event treasures upon their adventure journals in addition to any story objects. If they did both, they receive both rewards. Each PC receives one item from the *DMG* with a gold piece value equal to or less than 25,000 gp and/or a *ring of freedom of movement* to be carried on their adventure journal until the results of this event are reported and their EV is updated.

Adventure Questions

1. **How did the PCs handle themselves during the battles in the Abandoned Cove and aboard the Khyber's Shadow?**
 - a) Constantly fighting, constantly maintaining their faction goals and alignments, the PCs handled themselves admirably and won through every encounter in their path.
 - b) Things got ugly in places but the PCs handled themselves well. (Use this option if the PCs lost or had to flee from one or more encounters but still made their way to Stormreach in the end.)
 - c) By the time they reached Stormreach, the PCs were bloody, broken and managed to fail at nearly task set forth for them.
 - d) The PCs never made it to Stormreach again.
2. **How did the PCs deal with the Cult Lords?**
 - a) Through force of arms and magic, the PCs were able to slay the hellcats and take out the cult lords.
 - b) At least one PC was dropped or taken out of action but in the end the cult lords were neutralized.
 - c) The cult lords were dealt with but it was a brutal encounter and at least half the PCs were out of the fight by the time it was all said and done.
 - d) The PCs failed to stop the cult lords aboard the Khyber's Shadow.
 - e) None of the PCs made it this far.
3. **What was the outcome of the PCs' encounter in the Vault of Sacrifice?**
 - a) The retriever was taken down and the prisoners all saved with great skill and leadership.
 - b) Though the retriever was slain and the PCs made it out with the refugees, there were some losses or lack of leadership in the process.
 - c) Half or more of the PCs fell to the retriever but the prisoners were saved in the end.
 - d) The Vault of Sacrifice was the end of the line for the heroes of Stormreach.
 - e) None of the PCs made it this far.
4. **How did the PCs do trail blazing from Radiant Hold to the shoreline?**
 - a) The PCs crushed both threats, blazing a safe path for both.
 - b) The PCs defeated either the minotaurs or the vinespawn, but not both.
 - c) The PCs failed to make either path safe.
 - d) None of the PCs made it this far.
5. **How went the PCs bombing run?**
 - a) The PCs sunk everything and shot down the enemy or drove them away!
 - b) The PCs did their best but had trouble and were forced to flee.
 - c) The PCs failed to maintain formation and instead fought the enemy
 - d) None of the PCs made it this far.
6. **What best describes the party's efforts to sink the *End of Days*?**
 - a) The PCs crushed all the threats easily and professionally placed and detonated the device.
 - b) It was touch and go, with the PCs largely running from fights, but they eventually got the job done.
 - c) The PCs failed to scuttle the ship.
 - d) None of the PCs made it this far.
7. **How would you rate the group's roleplaying?**
 - a) Exemplary! Everyone was in character and having a grand time.
 - b) Good! Most of the Players were enjoying themselves and acting in character.
 - c) Decent. There was some in-character action but not a considerable amount.
 - d) None! The game was little more than tactical decisions and dice rolling.

Story Objects

Survivor of the First Strike

Code: EXEG01

You have survived the Table's initial assault on Stormreach and the conspiracy's direct attempt on your life. You have been marked as a figure of Prophecy in this dark time and may benefit from that auspicious choosing when you need it most. Once per adventure, you can choose to spend two action points instead of one when you wish to augment a die roll. If you do, you do not roll as normal. Instead, you receive the maximum result you could have achieved + 1.

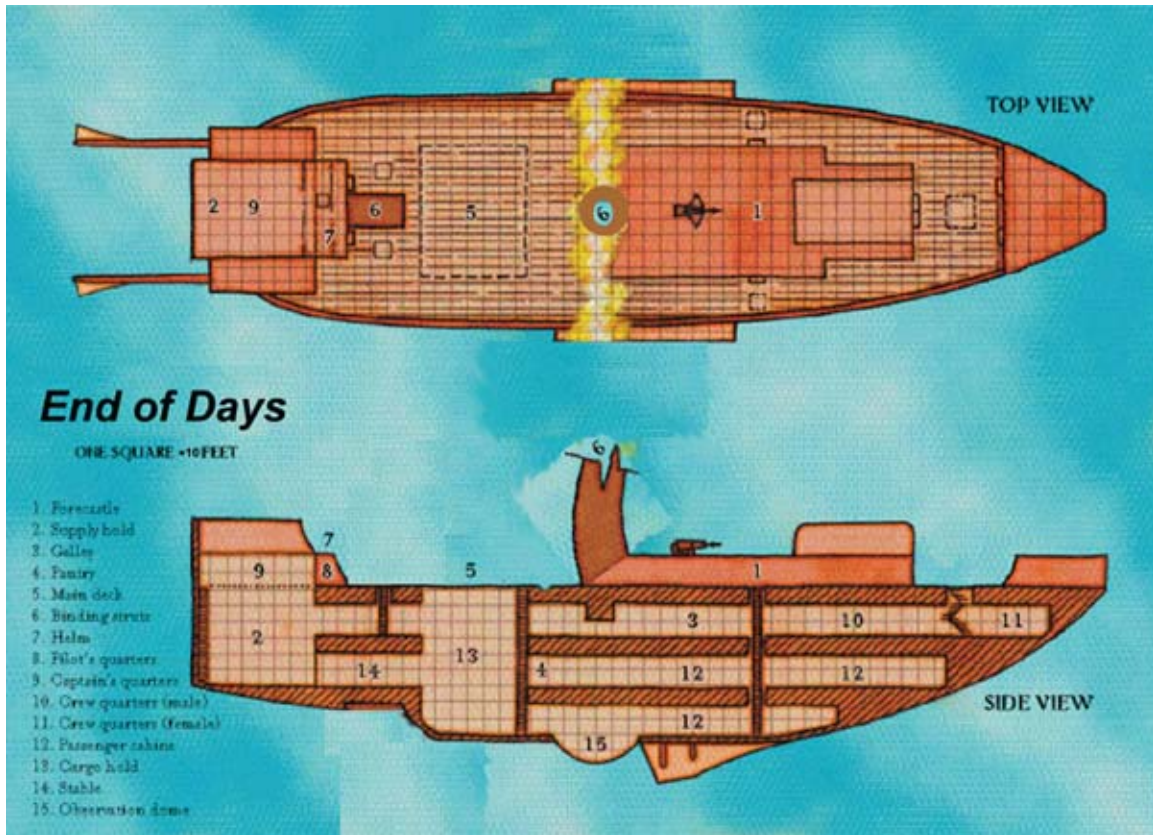
Savior of the Factions

Code: EXEG02

You are lauded as a hero by all of the factions for your efforts to sink the *End of Days* and clear an escape path. As a hero you gain a +2 circumstance bonus to all Diplomacy rolls with members of your faction. In addition, you are awarded a magical pin in the shape of a sinking ship, symbolic of your accomplishments. Once you may call upon its power to put off death that you might meet your true destiny as a champion of your faction. You may use this pin if you are taken to -10 or lower by a single attack and instead be placed at -8 (though not stable). When this pin is used, record it in your adventure journal.

Appendix One: Map of the *End of Days*

One square equals 10 feet.



Appendix Two: Cut Scenes

First Scene

Looking out on the hordes arrayed before him, a lesser man would feel despair. Lord Xandrin Corvalis instead is filled with determination. Turning to those in the courtyard below him he offers encouragement, "They have not brought enough to take the Hold. They know not our strength!" Cheers erupt from the scant forces inside, but they ring hollow in the Lord's ears. They will be lucky to see the night.

Elsewhere on the other side of the wall, a young scholarly looking man walks unseen through the enemy lines of hardened soldiers and seemingly endless constructs. He holds a rotting tome tightly to his chest. He knows that he is about to die. He knows because it was written among the prophecy centuries ago, recorded decades ago, and found by him only a month ago. Only a month to prepare... but he goes willingly. What choice does he have? It is written, and so shall it be.

Second Scene

The young scholarly man looks down at his flayed body, blood dripping freely from his many wounds, soaking the ropes that bind him to the table.

Putting down the knife, Guiver'lan d'Tharashk, leader of the Table leans over the boy, "I will only ask you one last time. How did you know to find me? How do you know who I am? How did come to this place? Speak!"

The boy coughs hard and struggles to lean towards his interrogator. "It was written..." Blood drools out of the side of his mouth as a wheezing gasp for breath makes him spasm.

"What was written? I demand you tell me!"

Whispering softly into Guiver'lan's ear, Territt Doslan, Tome of the Crimson Codex, sighs his last breath, "It was written... that I would die as the distraction that kills you."

Guiver'lan did not even have time to stand as Veleste the Silken Blade steps from the shadows and slits his throat, the Dragonmarked lord's blood mixing with that of the simple boy on the table.

Third Scene

Radiant Hold burns with magical fire. The living inside heap the dead to raise the height of the defenses, but the enemy keeps coming, breaching the walls. Captain Skyne Tragar looks around her on the wall and realizes that she is alone. All of those supporting the gnoll's vicious defense have fallen to the Table's onslaught.

A halfling riding a dinosaur larger than a house bears down on her section of the wall. The bloody flesh of its enemies stuck in its teeth. Shaking her head and talking to no one in particular, Tragar utters, "Why is always up to me?"

With a battle cry that gives the dinosaur pause, Tragar yells "One Aim, United!" and vaults over the wall, charging to the dinosaur and her death.